EAST BAY EXPRESS

MAY 23 2

THE NEW NEWS ECONOMY

As newspapers struggle, nonprofit news is being touted as the key to the future. Is it?

By Rachel Swan & Ellen Cushing

A New Vision for Alameda Point Environmentalists and local activists are pushing for a new park on the former Naval Air Station, and to move a planned VA facility **pg. 8**

Cuban Musicians Return to the Bay Area With travel restrictions eased artists find eager audiences **pg. 15**

Scouring the Oakland Coliseum for a Decent Meal Plus kitchen fires take popular Chinese restaurants out of commission **pg. 30**

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On the Cover *Illustration by Brian Kelly*

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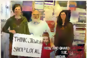

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NEWS & OPINION

LETTERS

What Happened to Curbside BRT?

There is only one Bus Rapid Transit system in the US that takes away the center two traffic lanes out of a four-lane corridor and uses them for buses only. The most common form of BRT, particularly when there are only four lanes, is curbside BRT, which uses the right-side lane for buses. The rapid buses stop at bulb-outs and local service is retained with stops at existing curbs. This gives faster, more reliable service without displacing parking and without forcing riders to wait for buses in the middle of traffic. In fact, the bulb-outs are a twofer: they are not only bus stops, they are mini-parks at no construction costs or maintenance for the city. Curbside BRT is superior for bus riders (particularly those with mobility problems), for businesses, for pedestrians, for bicyclists, and even for cars. So it seems like what Joe Mefusa is looking for. For more info check out my blog: ACTransitWatch.Blogspot.com

Joyce Roy, Oakland

Environmentalism Isn't Always Easy

I was very encouraged when I first read about the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal that was to whisk commuters from downtown Berkeley to downtown San Leandro along corridors on which BART does not go. It is now very discouraging and infuriating that even supposedly environmentally progressive places like Oakland and Berkeley are either rejecting or greatly reducing a public transit program that would get many people out of cars. Berkeley started this by selfishly rejecting BRT because some parking spaces along Telegraph Avenue would be lost. Now people in Oakland are complaining that the East Oakland section would increase the speed of bus traffic and might cause traffic delays in front of a temple. I'm especially outraged by the selfish attitude of the people in Berkeley who are responsible for eliminating that portion of the route. This is certainly not the Berkeley in which I lived from 1983 to 1988, and makes me apprehensive about the Berkeley to which I'll soon be returning.

If we are ever going to stop destroying the Earth by, among other things, using fossil fuels, we cannot let what in comparison are petty complaints stop things like BRT. Modern humans can come up with all sorts of excuses why we don't want to give up our destructive unnatural lifestyles. But there are only two choices: live more simply and naturally — which in this case means eventually getting private motor vehicles out of urban areas, for starters — or continue to have Gulf of Mexico- and Exxon Valdez-type oil spills and burn up the planet with human-caused climate change.

Because everyone in this society was born into a world of cars, they seem as natural as the sky. But the facts are that cars didn't even exist a little over 100 years ago, and fewer than 10 percent of the people on this planet drive. We need to consider the health of the earth in everything we do in modern life. Driving is the one thing that almost everyone in this society does that is very harmful to our planet and could easily be eliminated. If we have to make some relatively small sacrifices in order to get people out of cars, they would be well worth it. The only other choice is to continue the massive harm that we are doing by driving. Real environmentalism is about priorities. If you don't prioritize the environment, how can you call yourself an environmentalist?

Jeff Hoffman, Oakland

Listen to the Community

I strongly feel that AC Transit should modify the BRT proposal to accommodate the needs of each community addressed in this article. AC Transit is a wonderful public transportation system in the East Bay; however, I would encourage the agency to be more culturally sensitive to the populations that rely on its services. The planning should continue until the officials find a great way to improve the welfare of all communities that will be impacted. Convenience, equity, health impact, efficiency, and attractiveness are important factors to consider.

Joe Lee, Oakland

It's About Cars, Not Convenience

BRT not a done deal? Sure, that's true. It's a big project and affects many groups of people. It requires careful planning and getting groups together to deal with the difficulties.

I get very weary of people who claim that AC Transit is ignoring objections and mindlessly pushing a pet project without much regard for the public interest. I was especially annoyed by the minister who blustered about complaining to the feds if his issues were not dealt with.

If anything, AC Transit has spent too much time striking each and every interest group. I'm afraid that BRT will be studied and compromised until it becomes unworkable.

If BRT service is not faster and more reliable than current bus service, it will not attract enough new riders to justify its cost. BRT is not a gift to people like me, who will ride buses anyway. BRT is not a gift to the disabled who can use Paratransit if riding buses is too onerous.

BRT is a gift to people who clog our streets with their cars.

The prime purpose of BRT is to get a substantial number of cars off the roads by motivating the drivers of those cars to become transit riders. If this does not happen, there's simply no point in building BRT. There's no need for it because the present buses, especially the rapid buses, are the best that can be done.

I have scant sympathy for BRT opposition based on loss of on-street parking spaces or on not wanting to give the BRT a bus-only lane. If BRT is really going to succeed in weaning drivers from their car habit, then implementing the BRT definitely should make car driving less convenient and more onerous.

All the other issues I see raised — for example, center versus curbside routes, traffic speed, allocation of bus stops and lane access for emergency vehicles, etc. — can be dealt with by negotiation and careful planning, but they are secondary to making sure BRT motivates enough car drivers to become bus riders.

Steve Geller, Berkeley

Stewart Get Hired

The Community Is Complicit

No doubt some investigative reporter is trying to find out how Matt Stewart was hired in spite of his lack of qualifications (and reasons for his disqualification) so that similarly egregious mistakes are prevented in the future. But blame should not be the aim. Instead, informing the community as to what it can do in this kind of situation — other than getting the attention of news media! — would seem to be important for ensuring that competent personnel are hired when a district administration pursues a "stonewall" policy. Cheers for the *Express*, but West County residents shouldn't have to always depend on its watchful eye.

Ruby MacDonald, El Cerrito

Where's District Leadership?

I am concerned that the West Contra Costa Unified School District leadership has not come out with any statement condemning the behavior of any employee that engaged in or did not report such emails. WCCUSD has spent a large amount of money on consultants to speak on cultural inclusion, racism and sexism. They are very quick to punish students for their behaviors, yet they hide behind "personnel confidentiality," which allows for the perpetuation of racism, sexism, and other deplorable behavior. The district should form a committee to research, review, and make recommendations on the plight of students of color and staff insensitivity.

Scottie Smith, Richmond

Seven Days

An Empty "Improvement"

Robert Gammon gives unwarranted praise to Oakland Police Chief Howard Jordan for his new tactic of snatch squads, which target select individuals in a demonstration for quick arrest. Gammon is once again repeating the skewed version of reality promoted by OPD: claims that those "perpetrated ... appear to be bent on vandalism and violence," and he is satisfied that this tactic offers a "glimmer of hope" and "an improvement" over previous methods of quashing and dispersing demonstrations by kettling hundreds, along with the copious (sometimes indiscriminate, sometimes targeted) deployment of tear gas and flash-bang grenades. What seems clear is that the latter don't frighten most protesters after one or two exposures, marking their serious failure as crowd-control techniques (for which they are not intended in the first place) — so now OPD brass have decided that a different manner of sowing fear, chaos, and confusion among nonviolent protesters is in order.

What I witnessed on May Day was squads of six to eight officers picking out individuals from their list of Occupiers to snatch — which includes not just the dozen activists with dubious stay-away orders. I also witnessed the snatching of those who were especially vocal in their condemnation of the new tactic as it was being used. In being surrounded and protected by up to a dozen of their colleagues, the arresting police can be as brutal as they like. For the most part, though, I saw the snatch squads going after those protesters who were carrying shields to protect themselves and their friends from the routine and pervasive use of chemical and other supposedly less-than-lethal weapons. Many times those with shields were targeted just to get the shields away from them, in order to make protesters more vulnerable to attack; no arrest followed those bullying forays into the crowd to grab these dangerous hooligans.

Who were the protesters arrested for allegedly being intent on vandalism? I'm not the only one who suspects they were specifically selected from OPD's Occupy protester playbook, those with previous arrests on trumped-up (and obviously political) charges that will never stick. People who defy arbitrary and brutal treatment, who resist the cavalier deployment of chemical weapons, who dare to stand up to the consistently out-of-control bullying by the police are being targeted for special (punitive) treatment in the streets. And it doesn't matter to the arresting officers if their charges are absurd; the important thing for them is to suppress any manifestation of resistance in that moment. OPD's message all along is that any defiance or refusal to accept their brutality will continue to be met with their first resort: violence.

The primary purpose of the snatch squads is to attack nonviolent protesters pre-emptively, to intimidate everyone nearby, and, like other arrests stemming from Occupy, to take certain people off the street for weeks (if not months), as they are forced into the harassing maze of the criminal justice system. This new tactic for OPD is not a means of arresting people who are allegedly engaging in illegal activity, and is certainly not meant to be a method of crowd control. How Gammon can believe this is "an improvement" over the kettling and gassing of non-violent protesters only makes sense in a climate that tolerates and encourages rampant and systemic police corruption and brutality, which is not just a problem in Oakland — see the recent too-big-to-ignore scandals with gang culture inside the LA County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Joe Arpaio's long-running antics in Phoenix. Readers of the *Express* might remember that such routine police abuses are the very things that are helping to drive OPD into federal receivership.

Lawrence Jarach, Berkeley

Don't Forget Four Square

What about Four Square of the East Bay? They meet every week on Thursday nights, year round, in the Rockridge BART station parking lot and play four square (the kids playground game). It's been happening for years now. It's super-friendly, totally free, and a whole lot of fun. Perfect for after the bar or after BARTing back to your car. Find them on Facebook.

Sean Manda Wong, Oakland

Editors' Note

The *Express* won eight awards, three of which were first place, in the San Francisco Peninsula Press Club's Greater Bay Area Journalism Awards, the winners of which were announced at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Foster City on Saturday, May 19.

The paper won first place among non-daily papers for general excellence, which covers all aspects of the paper's design and content. Elsewhere in the non-dailies division, co-editor Robert Gammon took top honors for news columns for Full Disclosure, and freelancer Kibby Kleiman won first in the sports story category for "The Road Less Traveled," his feature-length profile of Oakland bicyclist Beth Newell. Art Director Brian Kelly took home second place for page design for his cover art associated with the September 21 feature, "How Peet's Starbucked Itself." That story, written by staff writer/web editor Ellen Cushing and concerning shifting corporate culture at the beloved East Bay coffee chain, also won second place among feature stories of a serious nature. "Hate Man," a profile of the titular Berkeley fixture written by co-editor Kathleen Richards and freelancer Sandeep Abraham, won another second place award on the other side of that coin, for feature story of a light nature. Finally, music editor Rachel Swan's "Culture Spy" won third in the feature columns division, and Cushing's "Trashed" won third in the news story division.

Because the East Bay Press Club has ceased holding awards dinners, the Peninsula Press Club contest has come to be the Bay Area's primary journalism competition, covering papers from eleven counties in the East, South, and North Bay as well as San Francisco proper. This year the *San Jose Mercury News* won the most awards, with 26. Among non-daily newspapers, *Palo Alto Weekly* took home the most plaques, nine, followed by the *Express* and the *San Francisco Business Times*, each with eight. According to the press club, this year's awards were selected from 440 entries, and were judged by press clubs in Bakersfield, Cleveland, Florida, Milwaukee, San Diego, and New Orleans.

Call for Reader Submissions

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Letters Policy

Please provide your full name, address, and daytime phone number, although we will only print your name, city, and affiliation. Send submissions to Letters@EastBayExpress.com or Letters, *East Bay Express*, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Letters are edited for length and clarity.

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by TOM TOMORROW
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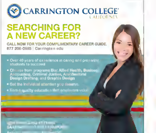
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BROWN'S OPTIMISM HAS BEEN COSTLY

His insistence that California's budget woes weren't that bad — when they were — might have cost voters a chance to close corporate tax loopholes

By Robert Gammon

OK, SO IT'S DEEPER THAN I THOUGHT
DeFreitas EAST BAY EXPRESS

Jerry Brown's recent acknowledgement that his administration had seriously underestimated California's budget woes was predictable. The nonpartisan **Legislative Analysts' Office** had been challenging Brown's numbers for months, contending that the governor was far too optimistic when he predicted in January that the California economy would rebound strongly and that tax revenues would be pouring into state coffers this year. Brown insisted that his projections were right, but they weren't. He admitted as much on May 14 when he revealed that the state's budget deficit was far worse than his office had estimated — $16 billion versus $9 billion — because of stagnating tax revenues. Consequently, Brown and the legislature are now facing much deeper cuts to essential state services than expected.

But Brown's misplaced optimism appears to have created problems beyond having to deal with difficult budget decisions. His insistence on downplaying California's financial woes over the last several months may have helped short-circuit efforts to raise corporate taxes in California and generate much-needed funds for the state. Proponents of the corporate tax measures, which would have produced billions in revenues, have either failed to gather enough signatures or appear to have abandoned their efforts altogether.

For example, earlier this year a noted East Bay law firm proposed a ballot measure that would have reformed **Proposition 13** to raise taxes on commercial property. Back in the Seventies, Prop 13 was sold as a way to protect homeowners from having to pay higher taxes as the value of their homes went up. Under the law, property taxes don't significantly increase until a home is sold. But the authors of Prop 13 also included commercial property in the measure, and as a result corporations have been able to keep their property taxes artificially low — even if they're making huge profits.

The proposed Prop 13 reform measure would have required that a commercial property be reassessed for tax purposes every three years — not just when it was sold. For years, progressive economists have championed this type of reform as a smart way to raise revenues for the state and close an unnecessary loophole. As a sweetener, the ballot measure backers proposed giving homeowners an additional property tax break. The measure, known as the **Protect Homeowners and Close Corporate Tax Loopholes Act**, would have generated about $3 billion annually.

However, in recent months the proponents of the measure decided to drop it. **Margaret R. Prinzing** of the San Leandro law firm **Remcho, Johansen & Purcell, LLP** declined to comment on why her clients chose to stop gathering signatures. But with Brown's rosy assessment of state finances, and his decision to pressure backers of other tax measures to abandon them out of fear that his own wouldn't pass, it's not hard to read the tea leaves. After all, if Brown had been right about the shape of the budget, then Prop 13 reform would have been a tough sell to voters — no matter how much sense the measure made.

Similarly, former longtime state Democratic Senate leader **John Burton** had proposed a 12.5 percent tax on oil and natural gas extraction in California. The tax would have generated $3 billion each year, of which $1 billion would have been earmarked for higher education. It also would have closed another unnecessary corporate loophole. California is one of a few states in the nation that does not tax corporations for extracting oil and gas. Even Republican-dominated states like Texas and Alaska do it.

At least another two proposed ballot measures also sought to implement a tax on oil and natural gas extraction in California, but they both failed. One would have enacted a 15 percent tax, the other, a 10 percent tax. Burton's plan doesn't seem to be making any progress either. He didn't respond to calls for comment, and a news database search found no stories about his measure after he introduced it.

As a result, California appears to heading toward November with only one tax measure on the ballot: Brown's **Millionaire's Tax**. And while it's a smart tax proposal, it will generate only about $7 billion annually, less than half of the $16 billion deficit that the state now faces. Consequently, state lawmakers will likely have to slash higher education spending again and shred the social safety net even more next month — a safety net that is already in tatters because of previous budget cuts.

A's Move to SJ Looks Dead

The proposal by **Oakland A's** owners **Lew Wolff** and **John Fisher** to move the team to San Jose looks like it's officially dead. Baseball Commissioner **Bud Selig** said last week that there was no timetable for when the league would even consider the A's proposal, the Associated Press reported. Selig also said that the A's are nowhere close to reaching a required deal with the **San Francisco Giants** to move to the South Bay. The Giants, which own the territorial rights to the South Bay, have blocked the A's' efforts to move to San Jose.

KCBS news reporter **Doug Sovern** reported that A's-to-San Jose booster **Larry Stone** said he interprets Selig's comments to mean the A's' move to San Jose is dead and no longer an option.

Selig also indicated that the A's might have to leave Northern California if they want to move out of the East Bay. Wolff and Fisher have said that they have no interest in keeping the team in Oakland. However, pressure has been mounting for Wolff and Fisher to sell the A's to an ownership group that will keep the team here.

Selig said that both the A's and the Giants made presentations last week to Major League Baseball's executive committee. Based on Selig's comments, it seems clear that the Giants' presentation was persuasive and that the rest of the league has no intention of overruling the Giants' opposition to the A's' move. The Giants have said that the financial stability of their ballclub — which must pay the annual debt the team took on to build the privately financed AT&T Park — depends heavily on keeping the territorial rights to the South Bay. And other owners appear unlikely to upset that financial balance, or to go against the wishes of a team that's trying to keep another ballclub from infringing on its territory. ●

Seven Days is culled from our news blog, 92510.

Robert.Gammon@EastBayExpress.com

LEGALIZATION NATION

THE SACRAMENTO SURGE

Medical cannabis supporters lower their freak flags, don suits and ties for lobbying blitz

By David Downs

Sacramento lawmakers got an earful from California medical cannabis patients Monday afternoon when about three hundred pissed-off voters flooded the halls of the legislature for a historic day of lobbying to support bills ensuring safe access to the drug.

This week the legislature may vote on San Francisco Assemblyman Tom Ammiano's AB 2312, which would set statewide rules on dispensaries in an attempt to end a seven-month federal crackdown on the billion-dollar California medical cannabis industry.

US Attorneys have closed hundreds of state-legal dispensaries by threatening asset property forfeiture. The crackdown's growing toll includes many of the best regulated model dispensaries in the state, including Berkeley Patients Group, Coffeeshop Blue Sky in Oakland, and the Marin Alliance for Medical Marijuana in Fairfax.

Ammiano's bill would create a new state regulatory body to license dispensaries in an attempt to emulate the more tightly controlled medical cannabis system of Colorado. Colorado has seen fewer federal raids and forfeiture threats than California.

The lobbying blitz caps a three-day Unity Conference in Sacramento organized by Americans for Safe Access, NORML, the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 5, and many other groups. At least five hundreds of patients arrived in Sacramento from San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, Riverside, and West Hollywood. Hundreds of patients networked, received training on lobbying messages, and listened to videotaped messages from Congressmen Dana Rohrabacher (D-Huntington Beach) and Sam Farr (D-Carmel).

Monday at noon, state Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) and Ammiano spoke before a crowd of several hundred on the lawn in front of the Capitol. The freak flag was not flying at the event, though: male attendees wore suits and ties or polo shirts while women wore dresses. Organizers and Capitol police had agreed to a strict no-smoking rule.

Americans for Safe Access spokesperson Jonathan Bair said registered attendees received specific lobbying assignments that corresponded to their localities. Working in pairs or groups of three or four patients, "we will be at every legislative office," Bair said.

"It's a diverse group, too. We have people whose only experience with politics is they need their medication and they've been thrown into the political system all the way up to sophisticated labor organizers," Bair said.

Lynnette Shaw drove up from the North Bay to speak on behalf of the 3,500 patients of the Marin Alliance for Medical Marijuana. The dispensary, which Shaw co-founded, had operated with a city permit in Fairfax for fifteen years until US Attorney Melinda Haag closed it down and seized the property this winter. "My patients are suffering greatly in Marin County," she said. "They took away my job, my livelihood, everybody I've been caring for."

AB 2312 will help end the raids, she believes. The lobbying day reminds her of the early Nineties, during the battles to legalize medical marijuana in California. Voters passed Proposition 215 in 1996, but only after years of coalition-building and tearful lobbying. "Dennis Peron called it the 'unfortunate dog and pony' show where, unfortunately, you go and make the senators and assemblypeople cry," Shaw said. "Tear by tear, step by step, we could get their vote. As soon as they started to cry, we would get their vote." Fifteen years later, "we've got a whole other generation of legislators. And a whole other generation of patients who are in danger."

From Prop 215's passage in 1996 through 2011, the medical marijuana movement has been fragmented, Shaw said. But now the crackdown is galvanizing the industry. "Many dispensaries were deliberately apolitical before it began," noted Matthew Witemyre, who organizes dispensaries and workers in Northern California for the UFCW Local 5.

"A lot of attorneys, frankly, were telling dispensaries not to be engaged in the political process as it might draw attention to them," Witemyre said. "We're really starting to see why that's not the way to do this." Today, even the most uninformed operators realize federal officials won't stop after putting the competition out of business. "A lot of us forgot we were expecting to be sitting in a jacuzzi. All of a sudden, the water's boiling."

Longtime advocate Harborside Health Center threw its weight behind the lobbying day, and BPG has become much more vocal since being shut down. Once-mum SF clubs like The Green Door and Vapor Room urged their members to rally in Sacramento on Monday, too. "They're going to continue to pick us apart one by one if we don't come together in solidarity," Witemyre said.

Seeds and Stems

Dhar Mann, owner of Oakland's gardening supply franchise WeGrow — the "Wal-Mart of Weed" — faces thirteen felony charges this summer for allegedly pocketing $44,000 in fraudulently obtained city funds.

On Thursday, May 17, the Alameda County District Attorney's office filed a complaint accusing Mann of pocketing redevelopment money the city had given him to pay contractors that fixed up his Oakland properties. The *Express* first reported in March 2011 on alleged problems Mann had paying contractors.

In December, we also reported that a group affiliated with Mann called "G8 Medical Alliance" became a finalist for a city permit to open an Oakland dispensary. G8 won the permit in March, pending the acquisition of a new lease.

On Monday, May 21, dispensary consultant Mickey Martin published a May 18 letter from the City of Oakland to G8 rescinding G8 Medical Alliance's dispensary permit. G8 had failed to distance itself from Mann, the city stated. ●

David.Downs@gmail.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

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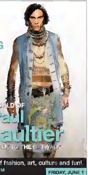

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ECO WATCH

A NEW VISION FOR ALAMEDA POINT

Environmentalists and local activists are pushing for a new park on the former Naval Air Station, and to move a planned VA facility.

By Corey Hill

Since 2006, the US Department of Veterans Affairs has been planning to build a massive new complex on the northwest edge of Alameda Point featuring an outpatient clinic, a national cemetery, and a conservation management office. And six years of complex negotiations with the City of Alameda, the US Navy, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are moving toward an endgame. But the talks have been environmentally sensitive because the seven hundred acres of former Naval Air Station land in question contain thriving wetlands and are home to one of the most important nesting sites of the endangered California Least Tern.

The Navy and Veterans Affairs are anxious to present a final plan to the public, but critics are raising questions about the closed-door nature of the negotiations, the thoroughness of the environmental assessment, and most critically about the overall suitability of building a 150,000-square-foot facility at that site.

The Center on Urban Environmental Law at Golden Gate University School of Law, which monitors the intersection of urban spaces and ecosystems and offers guidance to government agencies in locating factories, roads, and parks, is concerned that the joint Navy/VA proposal is missing out on a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a world-class park in the East Bay. As such, the environmental group is offering an alternative vision, a design that locates the VA facility in a different part of Alameda Point and creates a shoreline wetlands park surrounded on three sides by the bay, offering unencumbered views of the San Francisco skyline. The Center on Urban Environmental Law also contends that a new park will drive up property values and have a long-term positive economic impact on the East Bay.

Currently, the northwest corner of Alameda Point isn't readily accessible; it's an expanse of cracked concrete and vegetation just beyond a battered cyclone fence that marks the western boundary of a row of giant hangar buildings. Much of the former fighter-jet airstrip has already begun to disappear as the wetlands reclaim the land; wildlife such as jackrabbits, geese, and pelicans thrive there.

Both the Navy and the VA, however, say that the proposed facility will preserve the wetlands, and are expected to release a draft environmental assessment in the near future, which will then be available for public comment for thirty days. If no significant impact is found as a result of the proposed action, the Navy and VA will release the final environmental assessment for public review before implementing any action.

Though the Navy and Veterans Affairs stated jointly — in advance of the draft document's release — that they expect no long-term environmental impact, the Center on Urban Environmental Law contends that the documents released thus far appear to focus on the immediate footprint of the planned new facility while neglecting to take a closer look at the long-term impact of a busy road and the influx of hundreds of thousands of vehicles each year. The group also is questioning whether that level of vehicular traffic can realistically have no immediate impact on the surrounding ecosystems.

Critics also say the negotiating parties aren't seeing the bigger picture. With Alameda recently losing the bid for a second campus of the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, the site formerly set aside for the lab is now available for other purposes. And opponents of the current VA/Navy plan say the property proposed for the lab offers numerous advantages: It's close to the *USS Hornet* Museum, it was slated to be given to the lab for free, and it doesn't have any of the seismic issues of the current proposed site. Moving the VA clinic also will provide Alameda an opportunity to protect the wetlands.

However, according to Paul Kibel, the co-director of the Center on Urban Environmental Law, the Navy is keen on moving the process forward, rather than pursuing a new location, apparently because of concerns over liability. "The VA has basically indicated to the Navy that they would accept the property as is and release the Navy from any further liability, which the Navy likes," Kibel said. "Other agencies like Fish and Wildlife have not been willing to agree to that. There was some discussion a few years back about a large wildlife refuge. One of the big sticking points was the Fish and Wildlife Service would not agree to release the Navy, due to the contamination cleanup it would require."

Some residents also have expressed frustration that they haven't been more involved in the decision-making process. Though part of the "Going Forward" Alameda Point redevelopment process has allowed opportunities for public comment, the bulk of the negotiations have taken place without meaningful input from outside parties. "I believe the site that Alameda offered for a lab campus at Alameda Point is the best site" for the VA facility, said Richard Bangert, a member of the Alameda Point Resident Advisory Board, which deals with environmental cleanup on the former Naval Air Station. Bangert also writes the Alameda Point Environmental Report. "It appears, however, that a deal has been struck that would have the VA locate its facilities on the northwest territories adjacent to the wildlife refuge. Unfortunately, all discussions have been behind closed doors, so I do not have the ability to weigh the various options that were before the decision-makers. I believe the best course of action would have been to bring the discussion out in the open so that the public could have participated in the final outcome."

The next meeting of the Alameda Reuse and Redevelopment Authority, part of Alameda's "Going Forward" planning process, is scheduled for June 6 at 7 p.m. at Alameda City Hall. ●

Editor@EastBayExpress.com

NEWS

TOM BUTT GOES TO WAR WITH THE PORT

The Richmond city councilman takes on the city's supposed economic engine.

By John Geluard

For the past several weeks, longtime Richmond City Councilman Tom Butt has been locked in a pitched battle with the Port of Richmond's executive director, Jim Matzorkis. And the port's populist image as a bustling engine of commerce and success has been critically wounded in the fight. In fact, it has become painfully clear during several contentious city council meetings that the port has been broke, deeply in debt, and poorly managed for years.

The port's numerous problems started to come to light during discussions over possible locations for a proposed security and operations center, which, in theory, would serve as a command hub should an emergency, such as a terrorist attack or natural disaster, befall the Richmond waterfront. The project is to be funded by a $3.8 million grant from the US Department of Homeland Security.

Butt urged Matzorkis to consider refurbishing a historic 26,000-square-foot building known as the Riggers Loft at Point Potrero Marine Terminal to be used as the new command center. Refurbishing the terminal and integrating it into the Rosie the Riveter National Park has been a city goal for years, but funding had never been available. Butt, a longtime advocate for the national park and for the city's historic buildings, suggested the Riggers Loft because if restored, it would also provide extra commercial space to lease, which could help defray the cost of the security center.

John Geluard

Richmond Councilman Tom Butt researched the port's security preparedness and found it to be lacking.

But Matzorkis was focused instead on a 3,400-square-foot three-story tower across the Santa Fe Channel at 1411 Harbor Way. The port had spent more than $500,000 on architectural designs and a contractor had been selected to carry out the work. In early April, Matzorkis put an item on the city council agenda that would have finalized the contract with Alten Construction. Butt then asked Matzorkis to temporarily remove the item from the agenda until the Riggers Loft could be looked at as a possible site for the security center. But Matzorkis wasn't interested and rebuffed the councilman.

The refusal triggered an angry email from Butt. "Your decision to keep pushing this makes no sense at all considering the timing issues," the councilman wrote. "You are giving me no choice but to start a full blown war."

Butt researched the port's security preparedness and found it to be lacking. One example is the $3 million nonfunctioning video surveillance system that Matzorkis had installed. The councilman also discovered there were no disaster risk assessments that would dictate a particular location for the port security center. "This has been going on for weeks," Butt said in an interview. "And they have yet to produce anything that substantiates their argument to locate the security center at 1411 Harbor Way."

Butt also pointed out that a 2011 internal audit found that the port's leadership had not completed a security plan, nor had it appointed a security officer, which has cost the public agency money because, without a US Coast Guard-approved plan, the port could not collect revenue from "layberthing," a term for temporarily docking vessels between cargo assignments.

Butt wrote a scathing seventeen-page report that highlighted the widespread problems at the port, distributed it through his popular email forum, and brought the issue up at city council meetings, which caused a great deal of tension for councilmembers and embarrassment for city officials.

Over the past several years, the city has trumpeted lucrative deals that the port signed with foreign auto manufacturers like Honda and Subaru to offload cars at the port as examples of Richmond's economic recovery and its friendliness to business. However, Butt's report dispelled the image of the port as a humming enterprise throwing off millions in revenue for the city. The contract with Honda will be worth $30 million over the course of fifteen years, but in order to secure the deal, the city shelled out millions to upgrade the port for auto offloading. "The total expenditure as of November 2011 was $38,580,100," Butt wrote in his report. "Only $22,349,232 of that was actually spent on Port property. The remainder was spent upgrading rail infrastructure on [Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad] property or within the BNSF rail right of way, a sweet deal for BNSF."

Another alarming fact is that the port owes $17 million to the city's general fund. The internal audit also chastised the port for its record-keeping practices. The port's tenants are inconsistently managed, with lax procedures for collecting security deposits. Of the thirteen tenants, two don't have lease agreements and two others have leases that are unsigned, while six have no provisions for rent increases, which alone cost city taxpayers $100,000 in 2010. The audit described the port's primary financial records to be "inconsistent," "unreconciled," "unreliable," and filled with "errors."

Butt's decision to air the port's dirty laundry also appears to have had an effect on Matzorkis, who is now downplaying the dispute with the councilman. "To this day, the port administration is open and willing to discuss issues like this with any member of the city council," Matzorkis said. "And we understand and respect that this is a policy decision for the city council."

In early May, the council tabled the security center project until the Riggers Loft can be analyzed for structural soundness. According to Butt, an engineering firm has concluded that the building is structurally sound, and after some additional soil tests, the council will determine which building to use.

City Manager Bill Lindsay said he expects to see the port break even this fiscal year and in the future it should produce a profit given the contracts with Subaru and Honda. Lindsay added that many of the problems brought up by the audit have been dealt with. The port is preparing a security plan and the tenant leases have all been brought up to date, he said. In addition, two new employees have been hired to normalize record-keeping practices. Matzorkis "has been focused on marketing — his attention has been to bring in new business," Lindsay said. "But as an asset, we need to work on the port so it can be better."

Butt said it shouldn't have taken an audit to correct the port's problems. He added that Matzorkis has spent $30,000 on "fruitless" trips to China to woo an electric car manufacturing company to offload its cars in Richmond.

"The port's executive director is not capable of running the Port of Richmond," Butt said. "I think he's proven it and that audit shows it." ●

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THE NEW NEWS ECONOMY
As newspapers struggle,
nonprofit news is being touted
as the key to the future. Is it?
By Rachel Swan & Ellen Cushing

The biggest shift in Bay Area journalism in years came not suddenly — with champagne and crying, or, alternatively, with quickly emptied desks and a different kind of crying — but in something like slow motion: whispers building to rumors building to point-blank questions, and, finally, press releases and official paperwork. After months of speculation, first internal and then external, the nonprofit news organization The Bay Citizen — roiled by the resignations of its editor-in-chief Jonathan Weber and its CEO Lisa Frazier in the fall, and then the death of its founder and primary benefactor Warren Hellman in December — officially announced in March that it would be merging with Berkeley's Center for Investigative Reporting, effective May 1.

And just like that, one of the most promising young journalism outlets in the Bay Area became part of one of the most respected news organizations in the country, and the East Bay became home to the biggest investigative journalism nonprofit in the nation. Local papers and national media blogs alike ignited with the news, and for good reason. This was big. In an era when newspapers are shrinking, the new CIR would be working with a comparatively massive $10.5 million operating budget and a staff of seventy people — up from just seven when Robert Rosenthal, the director of CIR, came on in January 2008.

The idea, according to Rosenthal, was to make the new Bay Citizen something of a local analogue to CIR's already existing (and highly lauded) California Watch project — the smallest of three geographically specific concentric circles, with The Bay Citizen focusing on the Bay Area, California Watch continuing to cover statewide issues, and the Center for Investigative Reporting working on stories of national and international import. All three brands would — and now do — fall under the CIR umbrella and leadership structure, and focus on investigative and "solutions-based" journalism rather than breaking news and culture reporting. The Bay Citizen and California Watch/CIR are still working out of their old office spaces on opposite sides of the bay, but when they find a new building, all seventy employees will be working together under one roof.

It's a big change, to be sure, but it's not necessarily new, nor is it confined to the Bay Area. In fact, this merger is but the biggest and latest example of a tectonic shift that's been underway for years now, as newspapers continue to founder and as nonprofit news organizations increasingly come to fill the holes left by layoffs and cutbacks.

Perhaps the best-known — save for the new CIR, maybe — is ProPublica, which made headlines in 2010 when its 13,000-word investigation into malpractice at a hospital in post-Katrina New Orleans, published in the *New York Times Magazine* just two years after the news organization's founding, won both a National Magazine Award and a Pulitzer Prize — the first ever for a nonprofit news organization. Since then, it's gobbled up another Pulitzer — that time the first such prize awarded to stories that never appeared in print — as well as a handful of other major awards, and has come to be heralded as something of a silver bullet for an ailing industry. As Gerry Marzorati, then the editor of the *Times Magazine*, said in his Magazine Award acceptance speech, "a lot of [newspapers] are going to look at places like ProPublica" for support moving forward.

And they have. In the last three years, nonprofit news organizations — and traditional media's reliance on them — have exploded. According to data from Harvard University's Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, there are now dozens of journalism nonprofits operating in the United States. Some, like the Associated Press, *Harper's*, and San Francisco's *Mother Jones* magazine, have been operating for decades (the former two for more than a century, in fact), but just as many have been founded in the last ten years. Many — like, again, *Harper's* and *Mother Jones* — operate with the same distribution model as a for-profit publication, but an increasing number are using a system more like that of the Associated Press. That is, they have no means of distribution of their own, but rather create content which is then sold or given away to other publications, like what ProPublica did with its *Times Magazine* piece. This is the model that CIR, California Watch, and now the Bay Citizen tend to use; according to its website, California Watch has partnered with or provided content to seventy local papers up and down the state, including the *Express*.

In many ways, it's a good setup for everyone. When the one-two punch of the Internet and the recession hit newspapers, the cuts were deep, devastating, and almost universal. But a nonprofit news organization like California Watch or ProPublica, shored up by foundation money and freed of the overhead costs associated with hiring ad-sales and circulation staff, is now taking on the work left undone by newspapers — and, in many ways, doing it more effectively.

At the same time, though, it's dangerous for newspapers to rely too heavily on content supplied by outside sources, especially when it's cheaper than bolstering one's own staff. While champions of news nonprofits argue that they're simply fixing an existing deficit in the mainstream news world, it's also clear that their very existence depends on that deficit.

In order to justify itself as an ancillary investigative unit for a publication like the *San Francisco Chronicle*, CIR has to ensure that the *Chronicle* needs that service. Thus, it's in CIR's best interest that the *Chron* buy content from an outside supplier rather than save the money to hire a reporter.

And that's where things get tricky. The nonprofit investigative model exemplified by ProPublica and CIR certainly depends on traditional journalism — but it also may be hastening its demise by providing cheaper content, facilitating more cutbacks, and, eventually, eroding brand recognition.

The new journalism model, meanwhile, is also being threatened by an outside source: the Internal Revenue Service. The explosion of nonprofit news organizations hasn't just spelled big changes in the newsroom; it appears to be wreaking havoc on the federal government's aging precedents for educational nonprofits, forcing the IRS to all but halt 501c3 approvals as it tries to contend with journalism's next wave.

Maybe the future of the future of news isn't so bright after all.

The success of nonprofit journalism relies on a rather unsettling paradox: It needs for-profit journalism to survive. One of the main goals of nonprofit news organizations is to effect change by reaching the widest audience possible. And since most nonprofits don't have tremendous reach by themselves — imagine the traffic for CaliforniaWatch.org versus SFGate.com — the best way for them to operate is by leveraging other people's audiences. That means forming partnerships with newspapers, TV and radio stations or distributing content to them.

Take, for example, the award-winning series "On Shaky Ground," a California Watch investigation that exposed the state's systemic failure to heed earthquake construction codes for schools. The project took nineteen months to complete, involved nearly forty reporters and producers, and ultimately went out to more than a dozen media partners, including the *Chronicle*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, the *Sacramento Bee*, KQED public radio, several Patch.com sites, ABC-affiliated TV stations, and the PBS NewsHour. California Watch also made an iPhone app and published a coloring book in several languages to make the story accessible for young readers. Within a few weeks of publication, the story spawned major reforms — including two internal investigations at the state architect's office, new legislation to change seismic standards at schools, and the release of $200 million in bond money repairs. It was nominated for a Pulitzer.

That's the journalism equivalent of going triple-Platinum, and a major feather in the cap for California Watch. But it couldn't have happened without an aggressive distribution model. Videos on the organization's website show staff sitting at a roundtable, creating their game plan and discussing ways to maximize the story's audience. In many ways, it resembled a product launch.

It was also a fundamental part of California Watch's business model. Nonprofits can't mimic the practices of a commercial enterprise — to avoid raising suspicion from the IRS, they have to show that every new revenue stream has an educational purpose — but they have to persuade donors of their efficacy, which means reaching a wide audience. The reason that foundations donate to journalistic enterprises, after all, is to produce blockbuster stories like "On Shaky Ground," which expose a severe social injustice, encourage readers to call or write their local policy makers, and ultimately put pressure on legislators to enact reform. CIR is a stalwart proponent of new media models — social media networks are a critical part of its armature, and it even curates an investigative channel on YouTube. Proponents argue that the best way to effect change, as a news organization, is to reach many readers.

And the funders agree. Daniel Silverman, communications director for the James Irvine Foundation — which is one of CIR's main benefactors — said that audience definitely matters. "Not to put too fine a point on it, but our goal is to educate Californians on governance and political issues," he explained. "So the more Californians we reach, the better." Jeff Okey, communications manager for the California Endowment, concurred. "There are so many ways that people consume news; we want to make sure it's distributed across all platforms," he said. Eric Newton, the senior adviser to the president of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, was a little more tentative, admonishing that sometimes it's more important that a story reach "the right eyes," rather than simply reach many eyes. But he agreed that, more often than not, volume factors into a news organization's ability to impact readers.

As such, it's in a nonprofit's best interest to provide content to as many news outlets as possible. (In fact, when the Bay Citizen ended its relationship with *The New York Times* after the merger, Rosenthal, in an interview with Nieman Journalism Lab at Harvard, cited as a partial cause "concerns" about the exclusivity of the two organizations' relationships.) And in order to do that, nonprofits have to convince potential buyers to purchase their content. In most cases, that's actually not too difficult. By virtue of being nonprofit, a news organization like CIR is obligated to sell stories at or below cost, to show the IRS that its purpose is wholly philanthropic, rather than mercantile. Many mainstream news partners see that as mutually advantageous. *Chronicle* Managing Editor Stephen Proctor said that forming partnerships with CIR and other outlets, such as the USC Annenberg School of Journalism, has allowed his newspaper to bulk up resources, and cover certain local issues in much greater depth.

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But what's symbiotic today could turn malignant tomorrow. Clearly, there's an inherent tension in the new news economy, one that could, conceivably, be the undoing of both for-profit and nonprofit news organizations. Right now, most journalists and media observers would likely agree that the relationship is working out on both sides of the equation: Nonprofits get distribution and a chance to effect change, making their donors happy, while newspapers get content for far cheaper than it'd cost to produce in house. But at a moment when papers are laying off their staffs in droves and cutting costs at every juncture — and, at the same time, when nonprofit news is growing like never before — it's not hard to see a future in which that balance shifts. The great promise of nonprofit news is that it provides a cheap and reliable way for papers to fill pages with fewer people — but what happens if and when newspapers come to rely on it too heavily?

Proponents of nonprofit news argue that there's no causal relationship between the rise of nonprofit news and the demise of commercial news, even if the former benefits from the latter. Kevin Davis, the CEO of Investigative News Network — a consortium of more than sixty news nonprofits — argues that the problems facing mainstream newspapers are endemic to their advertising model, which started deteriorating once advertisers found better options than "juxtapos[ing] display ad with content that may or may not be on point with its marketing message."

Jeff Hermes, founder of the Digital Media Law Project, agreed that most nonprofits have a mutually advantageous relationship with their for-profit partners, particularly in an age of newsroom bloodletting. Rosenthal, who himself was ousted by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for cost-cutting reasons far earlier than the existence of organizations like ProPublica and California Watch, pointed out that "the downsizing of newsrooms began long before there was this model for nonprofit investigative reporting." News analyst Steve Outing argued, furthermore, that traditional periodicals have always relied on the AP, and so far, it hasn't rendered them moribund.

The problem, though, is that even though newspapers have been in trouble for a while, the ante has been upped considerably in recent years — and, moreover, that a nonprofit like CIR is quite different from a wire. While it's understandable that a metro newspaper like the *Chronicle* wouldn't have adequate funds to open a bureau overseas to cover the European debt crisis, the notion of hiring another outlet to cover local news because it's cheaper is a much dicier proposition. In reality, *Chron* reporters are perfectly capable of covering most of the stories that California Watch publishes — the real problem is that there aren't enough of them. And the danger of running CIR stories to supplant regular *Chron* reportage is that an influx of outsider bylines would undermine the *Chron* brand.

Whether or not readers actually notice journalist bylines has long been a point of contention in the news world. Rosenthal insists that they don't. "To be honest, I don't believe people outside the journalism world pay attention to bylines," he said, offering an example: "The average person, if they read a story by Zusha [Elinson, The Bay Citizen's transportation reporter], they won't tell their friends it was by Zusha. They'll tell them it was from California Watch, or in the *Chron*. You don't say, 'I read a story by the AP,' you say 'I read a story in the *Merc*.'"

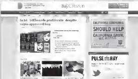
Robert Rosenthal of the Center for Investigative Reporting says the downsizing of newsrooms began long before the model for nonprofit investigative reporting.

To a newspaper, though, the whole point of having a vessel is to fill it with unique content. Even Proctor, who generally sees the value in nonprofits, admitted that everything on the front page of the *Chron* is usually staff-generated — an acknowledgement of the perceived importance of the paper providing its readers with stories they can't get anywhere else. A mere glance at the paper's May 10 issue proved as much: all four stories on Page One were written by *Chron* reporters, including a piece about President Obama declaring his support for gay marriage. If any story could have been easily outsourced (to AP, for example), it was that one. But the *Chron* editors obviously thought it was important to produce the Obama story in-house — a further admission of the value of brand uniqueness.

Thus, if the *Chron* were to start filling its front page with stories purchased from CIR, it could wind up on the slippery slope toward brand dissolution. After all, what's the *Chron's* value if its front page looks more or less like every other paper up and down the state? And why subscribe to the *Chron* anymore when you can find much of its content in the *LA Times* or, better yet, for free at California Watch's website? From there, it's not all that hard to see the endgame: Brand dissolution means readers have less reason to pick up a specific newspaper — and in a news economy in which most papers are still earning the majority of their revenue from print readership, that's the kiss of death.

For an outlet like ProPublica, this is may be less of an issue. That organization typically only sells a story to one paper at a time, and it's largely focused on deep investigative work — work that is, by definition and design, time-consuming and labor-intensive, and which for that reason has by and large already been excised from many newsrooms. ProPublica stories wouldn't show up on front pages across the country, both because of the organization's exclusivity clauses and because of its relatively slow rate of production. And even if they did, it wouldn't have been a choice between a newspaper buying the story and having a member of its investigative team produce it, because there is no investigative team any more.

But that's not the case with The Bay Citizen.



In SF, billboards proliferate despite voter-approved ban

The Bay Citizen mostly focuses on relatively small-scale civic issues — stories that, theoretically, could be covered by daily newspaper reporters.

Despite its self-proclaimed commitment to "solutions-based" reporting — that is, according to Rosenthal, journalism that spawns results in some way, whether that's increased awareness, changed behavior or, ideally, legislation and regulation — The Bay Citizen mostly focuses on relatively small-scale civic issues. Take the BayCitizen.org landing page from May 15. Of the seven lead stories, three were produced by Bay Citizen staffers, three by California Watch staffers, and one by the wire service Bay City News. The three by Bay Citizen writers were about San Francisco billboards; a mobile app that scans bar patrons' faces; and tightening state oversight on vocational schools. All were important stories, to be sure, and thoroughly reported and well-written — but none were pieces that a beat reporter for the *Chron* or Bay Area News Group, which publishes the *Oakland Tribune*, the *Contra Costa Times*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*, couldn't have covered. But buying stories from The Bay Citizen is cheaper for newspapers and easier than assigning a staff writer. And with papers struggling to save money in any way possible, it's not hard to imagine the Bay Area News Group, for example, replacing more and more of its content with Bay Citizen stories, thereby coming to look more and more like every other paper in the region.

In other words, it wouldn't take much to tip the precarious balance that nonprofits and for-profits have set up in order to co-exist. If nonprofit news continues to cover stories that for-profit papers traditionally have, and continues to allow papers to lay off their staff (or not hire new staffers), for-profit newspapers will, fundamentally, come to be devalued. Then there's a spiraling effect: the more newspapers that go out of business, the fewer places nonprofit news organizations will have to run their content. The fewer vessels nonprofits have, the fewer staff they need. And so on.

In short, the new news economy is operating on a tightrope, and doesn't seem to know it.

There's another wild card that could easily throw a wrench into the system: the IRS. Although the agency hasn't issued a specific ruling, it has set up roadblocks in the past two years preventing journalism start-ups from attaining tax-exempt status, and the delays have been paralyzing. SF Public Press, for example, has waited two years to become a 501c3. Executive Director Michael Stoll said that if its application isn't cleared soon, the news organization will probably wither and die. So will many other organizations, said Davis of the Investigative News Network. "I can tell you that this problem with the IRS is having a chilling effect," he said. "The difficulty of getting this very necessary designation means the movement is stifled."

Traditionally, nonprofit journalism would fall within the "educational" category for tax-exempt organizations, since their purpose is to disseminate information for public benefit. As such, current laws prohibit them from weighing in on political campaigns, privileging "mass appeal" content over fact-based news, and using business methodologies that resemble those of a commercial operation. They also have to sustain distribution models that hew to their mission of effecting change.

In the past couple years, a spate of journalistic organizations applied to become nonprofits — enough that high-profile donors like the Knight Foundation would get up to a dozen applications from a single city from start-ups all claiming they were "doing something new." The IRS noticed it, too, and suddenly became wary. After all, it set most of the precedents for nonprofit tax exemptions prior to 1970. (It created a rubric for educational organizations in 1967.) Nonprofit journalistic organizations existed back then, but they certainly weren't as numerous, and they operated in a completely different news environment. Since the onslaught of nonprofit journalism applications could be grounds for a new precedent, the agency has been proceeding with caution. Hermes of the Digital Media Law Project surmised that the news start-ups warranted consideration as a group, rather than on a case-by-case basis — though, that said, the IRS evidently made an exception for the Investigative News Network, which became a bona fide nonprofit in March.

While there's no evidence of ill will on the part of the IRS, the delays have created a huge financial setback for young outlets, many of whom can only sustain themselves by partnering up with an existing nonprofit that can serve as a financial sponsor. SF Public Press formed a relationship with Independent Arts & Media that falls along those lines — it can solicit grants under the auspice of the larger organization, but it has to pay a fee for every donation it receives. "So it's like a 7 percent tax that's slowing down our growth,"

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Stoll explained. He added that it's very difficult to approach foundations without the 501c3 imprimatur. "Fiscally sponsored projects may get a third to a half of what an independent 501c3 gets," Stoll lamented. "No one's said that explicitly, but that's been our experience. So we've lost many thousands of dollars." Not to mention that SF Public Press misses out on Google grants, discounted software from Salesforce and Tech Soup, and reduced-cost insurance.

To make matters more difficult, the SF Public Press foundation funds often come with the admonishment that the organization needs to become a 501c3 as soon as possible. The implied message: Without that designation, more money isn't forthcoming. "So we've had to plead with our funders," Stoll said. He acknowledges that while this "intermediate" tier of philanthropy might work as a temporary Band-Aid, it's ultimately not a viable business model. Davis agrees.

If the IRS continues to drag its heels, then many agencies with the same intentions as CIR could quickly die. That would, in effect, strengthen the existing nonprofits. They would have access to a greater share of a finite amount of foundation money, which, in turn, would allow them to boost their staffs and widen their reach. CIR's current staff of seventy dwarfs that of most daily and weekly newspapers.

Kevin Davis, the CEO of Investigative News Network, said the problem with the IRS is having a chilling affect.

More problematic, though, is the fact that if mainstream newspapers have to rely heavily on one nonprofit for a large portion of their content, then all of them would start looking the same. But that wouldn't necessarily be true if the outside content were culled from a variety of sources. A newspaper that purchases some of its content from an outside supplier can still distinguish itself as an aggregator. But that's not possible without multiple suppliers to choose from.

Paradoxically, having a healthy variety of nonprofit news outlets might actually be good for for-profit newspapers, especially since nonprofits aren't allowed to act as commercial operations — SF Public Press only earns 20 percent of its revenue from content-sharing, versus 80 percent from foundations. Yet, a sudden onslaught of 501c3-certified news start-ups might also pose threat to the for-profit press. If the IRS were to have a change of heart tomorrow and suddenly loosen its standards for journalistic tax exemptions, then newspapers would suddenly face an onslaught of competition from outlets whose very purpose is to be as widespread and voluminous as possible. At a time when many for-profits are putting up paywalls and cutting their circulation, it could be extremely damaging to suddenly have a new peer that offers similar content for free.

Davis suggested that the two paradigms are actually at cross-purposes. "As newspapers continue to turn to paywalls and close off their news, and make it available only to those who can afford it, they actually become less attractive," he said. "If you look at the mission of the majority of nonprofit news organizations, it's to get that content out and have an impact."

Commercial newspapers don't compete with nonprofits for advertising dollars, but they do compete for readers, which are inherently related to advertising dollars — given that the product a newspaper sells to advertisers is its audience. If the *Chronicle*, for example, publishes a lot of California Watch stories, and California Watch offers the same content for free on its website, then readers would have less incentive to pay for a *Chron* subscription. More audience-share competition would impact the *Chron*'s website, SFGate.com, as well. If more people click on CaliforniaWatch.org to get their news, rather than clicking on SFGate, then the overall page views for SFGate would decrease. That's dangerous for a publication that relies on pageview metrics to make advertising revenue.

Still, nonprofits have a point when they say that they're simply trying to stanch a wound that already exists. Davis argues that the model isn't an indictment of any one newspaper — it's acknowledgment that the system, at large, is broken. People aren't even relying on old school rubber-banded, paper-and-ink newspapers to get their news anymore. They're using social media — the folks who, ten years ago, might have looked for a paper on their doorstep every morning are now checking Twitter as soon as they wake up, and using friends' status updates on Facebook as their news feed. It's a brave new world for journalism, Davis says, and you just can't expect the old paradigm to work anymore.

Yet, if the new model of free, mass-distributed, donor-funded, high-impact news eventually supplants the old one, is that any better for readers? There's a finite pool of professional journalists in the Bay Area, and if you look at the masthead of CIR, you'll see it consists, largely, of refugees from for-profit outlets. That alone suggests that the relationship between nonprofits and for-profits is somewhat problematic. As the new system grows, it enables the old system to cut back, which could ultimately be deleterious to both sides.

After all, fewer newspapers mean fewer vessels for nonprofits to distribute their content — and if the goal is maximum impact, then even a robust nonprofit might fall short. ●

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CUBAN MUSICIANS RETURN TO THE BAY AREA

With travel restrictions eased artists find eager audiences.

By C.K. Hickey

In his tight black T-shirt and pants David Calzado arrived on stage at Yoshi's in San Francisco in April with a wave of rock star fanfare breaching the musical border between the United States and his native Cuba. His band, La Charanga Habanera, moved from an homage to Earth Wind & Fire — a band it has opened for in the past — to a polyrhythmic Latin jam. The dance floor filled and the crowd soon started chanting, "David! David!"

An artist specializing in the urban Afro-Cuban dance genre called timba, Calzado is one of his country's most popular musicians. He established a devoted following in the United States in the late 1990s but was barred from touring here from 2001 to 2009 due to a tightening on the Cuban embargo.

But three years ago the Obama administration issued a waiver easing economic sanctions and allowing travel by Cuban artists. The importation of Cuban music, brought to a near standstill in this country under former President George W. Bush's foreign policy, now shows signs of revival.

For Cuban bands like La Charanga Habanera doing business in the United States has been a frustrating series of stops and starts. Starting with the Carter administration, every American president has swung the pendulum back and forth between tolerance and hostility. But the US embargo against Cuba — imposed fifty years ago by John F. Kennedy — has never been lifted.

C.K. Hickey

For bands like La Charanga Habanera, touring in the United States has been frustrating over the years.

Under the rules of the embargo, Cuban musicians must follow a procedure of petitions, consulate interviews, and State Department approval before a tour in the United States can begin. And once here, there are even more rules about who gets paid and how much. The US Code of Federal Regulations prohibits Cubans from "compensation in excess of amounts covering living expenses and the acquisition of goods for personal consumption," US Trade Representative John Sullivan wrote in an email.

As reported by Oakland North last year, the Oakland airport has begun allowing flights to Havana for academic, religious, newsgathering, or humanitarian reasons. However, this excludes performers. A band can travel back and forth under the "public performance" category but approval is on a case-by-case basis, according to San Francisco immigration attorney and Cuban music producer William T. Martinez. Nonetheless, the opening up of Oakland airport to Havana represents a larger trend: a cultural and political connection between Cuba and the Bay Area.

For example, Martinez specializes in delivering non-immigrant visas for performing artists. "Culture cures" is his mantra — i.e. culture leads to communication between countries, and communication is beneficial to everyone.

Soon after Obama waived some key embargo restrictions early in his administration, Martinez decided to launch a series of test cases with immigrant visas. "We were going to have an experiment to see how Obama wanted to handle travel," he said. Martinez and his associates started by seeking a visa for the musician Silvio Rodriguez. When that effort proved successful, they helped popular groups such as Los Van Van and La Charanga Habanera come in 2009.

Martinez was also instrumental in creating visa test cases for Cuban artists in 1994, prior to the Cuban music craze of the late Nineties. The first was for the rock fusion band Mezcla. Its founder, Pablo Menendez, was born in Berkeley but later moved to Cuba.

"Right now it's still an exciting opportunity for a lot of folks," Martinez said. "We haven't seen an oversaturation point, but there are a lot of groups coming in." Among those groups is Havana D'Primera, which launched its first-ever American tour with an appearance at Yoshi's San Francisco on April 27. Ticket demand was so high that the club's management extended the band's booking from four shows over two days to five shows over three days.

Building an audience for these bands is a matter of "word of mouth ... and persistence," Calzado said through a translator. "And because the United States has a blockade, we've had to work twice as hard." La Charanga Habanera played seventeen cities during its recent tour, including a first-ever appearance in Las Vegas.

Timba, like salsa, is a modernization of the Cuban son genre, but goes much farther in its harmonies, rhythms, and forms, according to Kevin Moore, the Santa Cruz-based editor-in-chief of Timba.com. The rhythm is fast and intense, and the music borrows liberally from a variety of other genres, including R&B, jazz, hip-hop, and even classical music. Bands typically feature electric keyboards, guitar, bass, congas, claves, a kick drum, and a horn section.

When given an audience, the music earns devoted fans. A musician himself, Moore was trying to write salsa arrangements with more interesting chord progressions when he traveled to Cuba in 1999. It was there he was first exposed to *timba*.

As he remembers it, the musicians were expanding the harmonic and rhythmic palette far beyond anything he had ever dreamed. "These guys studied classical, jazz, R&B .... There was no reticence to throw in everything that they liked," Moore said. "I just went completely out of my mind."

Moore spent the next thirteen years studying *timba*. He lugged a laptop capable of recording music on subsequent trips to Cuba and tried to apply what he learned within the Bay Area music community. He's currently writing a series of *timba* music books called *Beyond Salsa*.

One reason Cuban artists admire the Bay Area is because they feel the local politics are more accepting. San Francisco "is an open city — very liberal," Calzado said. He smiled. "It's also beautiful."

By comparison, Miami includes many Cuban Americans from the first wave of immigration following the rise of Fidel Castro. Those Cubans tend to be more anti-Communist than their offspring.

"If Los Van Van plays in Miami, they have to fight against their association with the Cuban regime," Moore said. "And when they play here, they can derive some of their audience from people who are not necessarily into the music."

Martinez agreed. "There's almost always something happening with Cuba — whether it's music or big political issues — that gets a lot of play here," he said. Among those issues, Oakland Congresswoman Barbara Lee co-sponsored the Export Freedom to Cuba Act of 2011, which prohibits the president from regulating or prohibiting travel to or from Cuba by US citizens.

But in spite of renewed interest in the music, feelings vary on its future growth. Javier Otero, Calzado's manager, would like to do something to diversify the audiences attending the shows. "The problem is that the crowds at the US shows are largely the same," Otero said, "predominantly Latino, and people who like Cuban nostalgia."

On the next Charanga Habanera tour, Otero says he wants to tap into the college crowd, specifically by giving a performance at UC Berkeley. He's also gunning for Charanga Habanera to get nominated for another Latin Grammy — the last time was in 2003.

Meanwhile, the specter of the embargo always looms overhead. "Although there's a substantial number of people who want to get rid of the embargo ... I'm not optimistic about there being a change," Martinez sighed. "Politics being what it is." ■

A version of this story appears on Oakland North at OaklandNorth.net

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EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS

Richmond's Riveting History

New visitor center brings cohesion to a diffuse national park

If you've been to the City of Richmond's Rosie the Riveter memorial, a tribute to the roughly eighteen million women (or "Rosies") who worked in US defense industries and other services during World War II, then you'll recall the site's focal point: a large, stainless steel sculpture that resembles a ship's hull and gives way to a pathway of engraved granite plaques describing notable wartime events. But 88-year-old Catherine L. Morrison can still see beyond the memorial to the vivid history it represents.

The bayside monument rests at the former site of Kaiser Shipyard No. 2, one of four WWII-era Richmond shipyards that produced 747 ships — a number unmatched by any shipyard complex in the country. Morrison was just twenty when, in 1943, she and her husband moved from Chico to work in the shipyard, he as a carpenter and she as a journeyman welder. The couple commuted by ferry from San Francisco each evening to work graveyard shifts on the same assembly line.

Courtesy Library of Congress

A welder at a Richmond shipyard in 1943

For Morrison, who'd previously worked at an ice cream parlor and a JC Penney store, the career change was both exciting and empowering. She still marvels at how, almost overnight, she and unprecedented numbers of women were working alongside men in industries that once excluded them. "It gave us a confidence that we didn't have before," she explained. "Before that, we knew how to wash dishes and change sheets and raise babies. The war changed everything."

The memorial to the former shipyard is just one of a slew of historical properties throughout Richmond that saw industrial activity during the war years. There's also the Ford Assembly Building, which produced military vehicles and now houses the Craneway Pavilion, and the SS *Red Oak Victory* cargo ship, now a museum. And while various public and private entities own the remnants of the city's war effort, each site is a part of the Rosie the Riveter/WWII Home Front National Historic Park, an administrative partnership formed in 2000 between the city and the National Park Service.

Because of the landmarks' scattered locations, visiting the park has been a somewhat arbitrary affair. "One of the most common questions we've gotten over the years is, 'Where is the park?'" said park superintendent Tom Leatherman. "Normally when you think of a national park, you think of Yosemite, where there's an entrance gate, you see the sights, and then you leave. But with this park there are no real boundaries to speak of — even the number of sights is vague."

That's why it's significant that, more than a decade after its founding, the park is finally getting a visitor education center (1414 Harbour Way South, Ste. 3000). Following a grand-opening ceremony on Saturday, May 26, the two-story, 12,000-square-foot facility will be open daily, housing history exhibits, historical film screenings, a classroom space, and much-needed maps. "This is really the beginning of an era in the park," Leatherman said. "We now have a destination where people can go to begin their journeys." Opening day events include the requisite ribbon-cutting ceremony with local public figures, ranger tours, kids' activities, and more. A group of Rosies, including Morrison (who's also a park volunteer), will be in attendance; she promises that they'll be happy to answer questions and reminisce. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., free. 510-232-5050 or NPS.gov/RORI

—Cassie Harwood

ATTRACTIONS

Blacksmithing Demonstrations Watch a blacksmith in action and learn about the history of the trade. Mon., May 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Every other Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Continues through June 30. Ardenwood Historic Farm, 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont. 510-544-2797. EBParks.org/Parks/Ardenwood.

[illegible] Bay Visit a pop-up art show, recycled motif workshops, sustainability demonstrations, seed-sharing workshops, and other Earth Day themed activities. Fourth Sunday of every month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. Jack London Square Farmer's Market, Webster and Embarcadero, Oakland.

Shipyard 3 Trail Grand Opening With a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by a two-mile walking and bicycling parade along the Bay Trail to the SS Red Oak Victory. Rangers will host tours. Meets at Richmond's Kaiser 3 Shipyard. To RSVP: TrailRSVP@EarthLink.net. Sat., May 26, 1 p.m., free. [illegible]

The Wonder of Wool Learn about sheep and how to turn their wool into bright hues with a [illegible] agent. Sat., May 26, 12:30-2 p.m., regular admission. Ardenwood Historic Farm, 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont. 510-544-2797. EBParks.org/Parks/Ardenwood.

FAIRS, FESTIVALS & FIESTAS

African Liberation Day 2012 The All African People's Revolutionary Party [illegible] the 54th commemoration of ALD on three continents and in the Caribbean. Sat., May 26, 12-5 p.m. EastSide Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland. 510-533-6629. EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

Memorial Day Weekend Celebration With live music, kids' activities, and sports. Call or visit website for schedule. May 25-28. Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, 41 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley. 510-843-3000. ClaremontResort.com.

Playland's Fourth Anniversary Celebrate the museum's anniversary with classic pinball and carnival games, and more. May 26-28, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. $10-$15. Playland-Not-at-the-Beach, 10979 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. PlaylandNotattheBeach.org.

Rosie's Big Band A celebration of the opening of the Rosie the Riveter Visitor Center with live music by Big Bad [illegible] Daddy, swing dance lessons, and more. 1940's period attire recommended. Fri., May 25, 7:30 p.m. $15-$25. Craneway Pavilion, 1414 Harbour Way South, Richmond. Craneway.com.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Free Quit Smoking Clinic Hosted by the City of Berkeley's Tobacco Prevention Program with auricular acupuncture. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-noon. Continues through June 2. Free. North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Ave., Berkeley. 510-981-5330.

[illegible] Happy Hour: Intro to Anal Play A Good Vibes sex educator shares the tips and tools to anal sex, from rimming to penetration. Wed., May 30, 6:30-7:30 p.m., free. Good Vibrations Lakeshore, 3219 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-763-2388. GoodVibes.com.

Lower Bone African [illegible] For ages 50 and up. [illegible] Tuesdays, 4 p.m. $3 suggested donation. South Berkeley Senior Center, 2939 Ellis St., Berkeley. 510-981-5170.

Newly Diagnosed: Breast Cancer Seminars For women who have just been diagnosed or are undergoing treatment. With group support and discussion by guest speakers. Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Continues through Aug. 14, free. Cancer Support Community, 3276 McNutt Ave., Walnut Creek. 925-933-0107.

KIDS

Bay Area KidFest A Memorial Day weekend festival for kids, with live shows, BMX stunts, Ronald McDonald, and arts and crafts, carnival rides, and more. May 26-28, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., $5-$12, free for [illegible] and seniors. 925-671-3087. KidFestConcord.com. Downtown Concord, 2450 Grant St., Concord.

[illegible] Memorial Day Open House With Bay-related crafts and activities for fam-

PICKS

Celebrating Elephants Day

Elephants are known for their immense size, prodigious appetite for peanuts, and unfortunate status as endangered species. But beyond these basic facts, there's a lot more to be learned about the lumbering pachyderms. You can start by stopping by the Oakland Zoo (9777 Golf Links Rd., Oakland) on Saturday, May 26, for Celebrating Elephants Day, which features heaps of elephant-themed activities and information stations including an elephant research camp, [illegible] barn tours, and more. Proceeds benefit the Amboseli Elephant Research Project, the longest-running study of wild elephants in the world. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. $9.25-$13.75, free for kids under two and adults over eighty. 510-632-9525 or OaklandZoo.org — *Cassie Harwood*

Celebrating Elephants Day.

Rob Cameron

Wiener Nationals

If you've never perused any of Golden Gate Fields' (1100 Eastshore Hwy., Berkeley) previous Wiener Nationals races, you've denied yourself a world of dachshund-infused delight. For those yet to witness the hilarity that ensues when scores of long-bodied dogs attempt to execute a thirty-yard dash in a setting typically reserved for horses, consider the coming Saturday, May 26, a chance to catch up. More than one hundred competitors will vie for cash prizes between the day's horse races, and will be sure to provide post-race entertainment when they waddle through the stands with their owners. 12:45-5 p.m. $6-$8, free for kids. 510-559-7300 or GoldenGateFields.com — *C.H*

[illegible] Mon., May 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. [illegible] Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda, 510-562-7275. EBParks.org.

Gold Panning Learn how to pan for gold and all about life in the California Gold Rush days. Sun., May 27, 12-4 p.m. free w/ admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Berkeley. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

Grandparents Clay Day With arts and crafts for kids and their grandparents, including a pottery wheel demonstration and clay modeling. Sun., May 27, 12-3 p.m. [illegible] admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Berkeley. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org.

Sea Squirts [illegible] activities for pre-school-age children. RSVP [illegible] Tue., May 29, 10-10:30, 11-11:30 a.m., $5-$7. Crab Cove, 1252 McKay Ave., Alameda, 510-521-7275. EBParks.org.

LGBT

East Bay Queer Book Club [illegible] Sun., May 27, 7 p.m. Books Inc., Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

[illegible], A Salon for the Future With poetry, theater, burlesque, movement, and music by queer African-American artists, including [illegible]. Sat., May 26, 8 p.m., $12-$15. [illegible] La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-849-2568, LaPena.org.

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

[illegible] Birth Celebration With [illegible] of a short prayer to Shakyamuni Buddha, followed by [illegible]. Mon., May 28, 7-8:30 p.m. [illegible] Tibetan Nyingma [illegible], 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

Mark Henderson: "The Birth of Shakyamuni Buddha" The speaker tells the story of the birth of the Buddha and leads a chant evoking the compassionate wisdom of Shakyamuni Buddha. Sun., May 27, 6-7 p.m. free. Tibetan Nyingma Institute, 1815 Highland Pl., Berkeley. 510-843-6812. Nyingma.org.

[illegible] Drumming: Drumming as Divinity Exploration of the relationship between spirituality and rhythm, led by author and musician [illegible]. Last Fridays, 7:30-9 p.m. free. Memorial Healing Center, Inc., 3279 [illegible] St., Emeryville. 510-652-5530. [illegible]

[illegible] A [illegible] May 26-27, [illegible] p.m. and [illegible] Berkeley Branch, 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0237. [illegible]

SALES, PROMOTIONS, & FUNDRAISERS

***Alice in Wonderland* Book Sale** [illegible] for sale and silent auction. Through May 26. [illegible] Bookstore, 721 Washington St., Oakland. 510-444-0473. FOPL.org/bookstore.

Ardenwood Farm Day and Open House With [illegible] farmhouse tours, blacksmithing, [illegible] cookies, old-timey games, and more. Mon., May 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. [illegible] Ardenwood Historic Farm, 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont. 510-544-2797. EBParks.org/Parks/Ardenwood.

Zachary's Food [illegible] to Support Local Food Banks Drop off canned and dry goods and other food items at any Zachary's Pizza [illegible] to be entered into a raffle [illegible]. Through May 31. [illegible] Zachary's Chicago Pizza, 5801 College Ave., Oakland. 510-655-6385. Zacharys.com.

SOCIAL EVENTS

[illegible] Movie Mondays Mondays, 7 p.m. free. The [illegible] Lounge, 1453 Webster St., Alameda. 510-864-1244. [illegible]

[illegible] Quilters All are welcome to join the quilters for help with projects. Sat., May 26, 12-3 p.m. Oakland Public Library, [illegible] Branch, 5801 Adeline St., Oakland. 510-238-7352. [illegible]

Bay Area Singles [illegible] With a buffet, music, [illegible] dancing, and more. Meet at [illegible] Square [illegible]. RSVP [illegible] Fri., May 25, 7:30-11:30 p.m. $[illegible]. [illegible]

Berkeley Underground Film Society and the film club for screenings of 8mm, Super 8, and 16mm movies and shorts. This week: [illegible] 16mm w/ sound. Meets at 708 Gilman St., Berkeley. Sun., May 27, 7:30 p.m. [illegible] BerkeleyUndergroundFilms. [illegible]

A Rested Lady Salon A women-only [illegible] RSVP. Sun., May 27, 4-8 p.m. $5-$20. [illegible] 5901 [illegible] Ave., Oakland. 510-788-0090. [illegible]

Summer Nights at [illegible] With a [illegible] screening of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, [illegible] *The Art of Daniel Clowes*, a book [illegible] Fri., May 25, 5-9 p.m. [illegible] regular admission. Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak St., Oakland. 510-318-8400. MuseumCA.org

SPORTS & OUTDOORS-PARTICIPATORY

Creekside Meander With a walk along the creek to Jewel Lake. Ages 8 and up. Sun., May 27, 1:30-3 p.m. free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

Hay Baling Make rope with an antique machine and learn how to use pulleys to hoist bales of hay into a barn. Saturdays, 2-3 p.m. Continues through May 26. Ardenwood Historic Farm, 34600 Ardenwood Blvd., Fremont. 510-544-2797. EBParks.org/Parks/Ardenwood.

[illegible] With hooping for people of all ages. Sundays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. free. [illegible] Jack London Square Farmer's Market, Broadway and Embarcadero, Oakland.

Memorial Day Farm Open House With opportunities to hold chicken, walk a goat, plant a seed, and more. Mon., May 28, 12-3:30 p.m. free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

Memorial Day Farm Open House With opportunities to hold chicken, walk a goat, plant a seed, and more. Mon., May 28, 12-3:30 p.m. free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

Midnight [illegible] Second and fourth Saturday of every month, 11:45 p.m. free. [illegible]

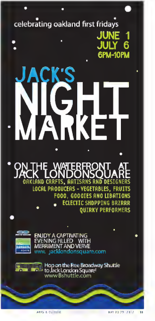
Nature Area Nests With a walk through the forest to observe birds' nest-building progress. [illegible] Sun., May 27, 12:30 p.m. [illegible] free. Tilden Park Environmental Education Center, north end of Central Park Drive, Berkeley. 888-327-2757. EBParks.org.

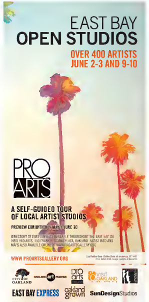
Pickleball A fast-paced game combining elements of tennis, ping pong, and volleyball. For all ages and experience levels. Played on the tennis courts. Tuesdays, 8-7:30 p.m. $3-$5. [illegible] 510-559-7213. AlbanyCA.org. Ocean View Park, 900 Buchanan St., Albany.

Pub Quiz Trivia Sundays, 7:30 p.m. free. Shell Bar, [illegible] Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-522-[illegible] [illegible]Alameda.com.

Sagi Yoga in the Garden Comfort-based yoga. Thursdays, 6-7:15 p.m. [illegible] through May 31. $[illegible]-$75. Ruth Bancroft Garden, 1552 Bancroft Rd., Walnut Creek. 925-944-9352. RuthBancroftGarden.org.

Windsurfing [illegible] Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., and for members, $75 for three sessions. CalSailing.org. Berkeley Marina, 201 University Ave., Berkeley. 510-981-6740.





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Lisa Fenton Rose, *Golden State*, oil on canvas, 30" x 48", 2011. Artist #159. Image courtesy of the artist.

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[illegible] is produced by Pro Arts, an Oakland-based nonprofit that supports the arts and its community serving [illegible] of artists. Pro Arts provides artists' access to contemporary art in the region and serves as a regional hub for arts activities: independent curated exhibitions, produced and artist-centered. East Bay Open Studios connects the public with over 400 regional artists and is accompanied by the *Directory of East Bay Arts* [illegible] East Bay Express. More information about the Preview Exhibition, events and online art at [illegible]

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MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Creative Rebirth

The Last Show on Earth at Mills College isn't entirely apocalyptic.

The exhibit presents a clear zenith of culture.

There is something in the air and we can't lay all the blame on the ancient Mayans. Apocalyptic prophesies aside, the year 2012 has found us rudderless. Without direction, our young artists emerge from graduate school treading water in a dangerous and trackless sea. How does an inspired emerging artist combat the spiraling fractures of this contemporary pluralism? The current graduate show at Mills College offers a navigational guide through this perilous time. Twelve artists, all incredibly varied in talent and style, come together and pull off a brilliantly coherent show.

Although the name of the show may be daunting, the exhibit represents a clear zenith of culture. In the words of Dr. Stephanie Hanor, director of the Mills College Art Museum, "The culmination of a two-year graduate program can feel like an apocalyptic experience." The twelve graduating students each present decidedly realized themes, manifested in impeccably focused art pieces. These themes revolve around four central ideas: personal identity, communal history, consumerist culture, and the nature of perception.

The point is illustrated by the work of four students in particular: Madelyn Covey, Kent Rodriguez Segura, Jocelyn Meggait, and Michael Mersereau. Covey uses yarn and painting (the only paintings in the exhibit) to address issues of the human body and its transcendence. In his installation, Segura uses rotting cabbage as part of a metaphor of disappearance and renewal. Meggait amassed a huge collection of free stuff via Craigslist and presents it as a complicated narrative of exchange. She encourages viewers to take items and reflect on their stories and why they were disposed. Mersereau's piece is located up a flight of stairs in the tower above the gallery and should not to be missed. By incorporating elemental environmental cues — a single light bulb, an eerie soundtrack, and an isolated location — he manages a fun and successful Zen-bleakness.

The graduating students in this exhibit are faced with a conundrum: How do you begin a career with what has been called "The Last Show on Earth"? Perhaps the title of the show was a distraction itself — it wasn't called "The Last Art Show on Earth." Perhaps these emerging artists are collectively describing a new course of art in general. Only by announcing the end of something can we get on with the beginning of the next.

The Last Show on Earth runs through May 27 at Mills College Art Museum (5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland). Panel discussion at Danforth Lecture Hall with the artists, moderated by Mills visiting assistant professor Stephanie Ellis, on Saturday, May 26, at 4 p.m. 510-430-2164 or MCAM.Mills.edu

— *Obi Kaufmann*

ART GALLERIES

ACCI Gallery: Oakland, [illegible] Appearances The gallery's annual recycle [illegible] exhibition, featuring works by Robert Cantu, Tom Chen, [illegible], Carol Larson, Katie McCabe, Carol Ross and Stephanie Hughes, and Jacqueline [illegible]. Through June 2. 1652 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2527. ACCIGallery.com.

Albany Arts Gallery: Peter Hong: Oil Paintings. With works of large, vibrant landscapes, seascapes, and floral still lifes. Through May 31. 1251 Solano Ave., Albany. 510-528-9580. AlbanyArtsGallery.com.

Albatross Pub: Anne Hong Thomas. With oil paintings by the Oakland-based artist. Through July 31. [illegible] 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2473. AlbatrossPub.com.

[illegible]: A [illegible] of [illegible]. With works by Deborah [illegible]. Through May 31. [illegible] 2601 Cedar St., Berkeley. 510-845-4848. [illegible]

[illegible] With [illegible]. Through May 29. [illegible] Ave., Oakland.

BAM/PFA: [illegible]: New California Art Circa 1970. An in-depth survey of conceptual art and related avant-garde activities by 60 artists and collectives in Northern and Southern California. Through June 17. **UC Berkeley Master of Fine Arts Graduate Exhibition.** With work by Kari Marboe, Frank Ernesto Marquez-Lozano, [illegible], Jesse Smith, and [illegible]. Through June 10. BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu/exhibition/mfa_2012. 2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-642-0808. BAMPFA.Berkeley.edu.

[illegible] Gallery: Oakland, [illegible] A solo exhibition of [illegible] works that [illegible] pictorial and collective memory surrounding issues of comfort, identity, and time. May 25-June 15. 1027 3rd St., Oakland. 510-881-2230. [illegible]

Bay Area Free Book Exchange: Threads + Words: The Artist Series. [illegible] featuring local artists' takes on the words "book," "free," and "exchange." [illegible] Through June 9. 10520 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-705-1290. BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com.

Berkeley Art Center: Art, War & Disability. Through June 2. **[illegible]: Art, War, and Disability.** With works addressing the effect of military pollution on people with disabilities by [illegible]. Through June 2. 1275 Walnut St. (at Live Oak Park), Berkeley. 510-644-6893. BerkeleyArtCenter.org.

[illegible] Cafe: [illegible] With paintings inspired by the [illegible]

Oakland, online and offline [illegible] by Oakland artist [illegible]. Through May 31. [illegible] 14th St., Oakland. 510-452-1304.

Chabot Space & Science Center: The Sun as Art. With images captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory and the NASA/ESA Solar and Heliospheric Observatory. May 25-Sept. 3. 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland. 510-336-7373. ChabotSpace.org.

O Gallery: Oakland Journeys. With works by 25 Bay Area artists including Darwin Peters, Thomas [illegible], [illegible]. Through May 28. 4225 Piedmont Ave., Oakland. 510-759-2535. OGallery.org.

[illegible] Art Center: [illegible] Selection. The gallery's annual show [illegible] works across media by [illegible]. Through June 21. [illegible] 24th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible].

[illegible] Brower Center: [illegible] River: Art, Advocacy and the [illegible] With nature photography by [illegible], landscape photography by [illegible]. Through Aug. 31. 2150 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-809-0900. BrowerCenter.org.

Doug Adams Gallery: Mining the Collection: Dimensions of Time. With paintings, sculpture, installations, and drawings inspired by the natural world by English artist Catherine [illegible]. Through Aug. 24. 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-8285. [illegible]

Expressions Gallery: This Land Is My Land. With land, sea, and cityscapes across mediums. Through June 1. 2035 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-644-4930. ExpressionsGallery.org.

[illegible] With street photographs by [illegible]. Through May 26. 1091 Calcot Pl., Oakland. 510-533-1700. [illegible]

Gray Loft Gallery: [illegible] A Group Show of Ten Artists. With works by ten female artists [illegible]. Through May 25. 2889 Ford St., Oakland. 510-[illegible].

[illegible] Art Gallery: [illegible] With works by [illegible]. Through June 24. 5148 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. [illegible]

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter: Paintings by [illegible]. On display at the ABAG Offices. Through June 29. [illegible] by Elizabeth Evans on [illegible] in the Lunch Stop Cafe. Through June 29. 101 8th St., Oakland. 510-464-7700. MTC.CA.gov.

Joyce Gordon Gallery: Line, Space, and Ab-[illegible] Expression. With [illegible] paintings by [illegible], and Emily Mills. Through May 29. 406 14th St., Oakland. 510-465-8928. JoyceGordonGallery.com.

Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden: [illegible] With [illegible]. Through June 5. 1223 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-2385. [illegible]

Kala Art Institute Gallery: [illegible] With works in various media addressing [illegible]. Through June 30. [illegible] 2990 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-7000. Kala.org.

Krowswork: [illegible] With explorations of [illegible] by Benjamin Lord, [illegible]. Through June 16. 480 23rd St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. Krowswork.com.

[illegible] Gallery: [illegible] With dimensional paintings and [illegible]. Through May 29. [illegible], Berkeley. [illegible]

[illegible]: [illegible] An exhibition of photographs, video, and installation work by Bay Area artist Keith Wilson. Through June 30. 1261 Sixth St., Berkeley. [illegible]

Mercury 20 Gallery: [illegible] A study in paint [illegible]. Through June 16. **[illegible]** With paintings and mixed media from gallery artists [illegible], Jill McLennan, and Mary Curtis Ratcliff. Through June 16. **Dark Alliances.** With asphalt building paper works by [illegible]. Through June 16. 415 25th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. MercuryTwenty.com.

Mythos Fine Art & Artifacts: [illegible] (1964-1966). With works by [illegible]. Through June 3. 1141 Solano Ave., Albany. [illegible]

[illegible] Tavern & Gallery: [illegible] With photographs of the Egyptian Revolution by [illegible]. May 26-June 15. 367 Grand Ave., Oakland. [illegible]

Pro Arts Gallery: East Bay Open Studios 2012: Preview Exhibition. With a self-guided [illegible] of more than 400 artworks, displayed salon style. Through June 10. 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland. 510-763-4361. ProArtsGallery.org.

[illegible] Studio & Gallery: A [illegible]

PICKS

What to Do With Your Orphan: A Manual

Although the subject matter might be strangely straightforward, Jennifer Ottinger's new paintings at Johansson Projects (2300 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) are anything but. Her work depicts children who we are told are orphans, engaged in normal, childlike activity. Upon closer inspection, however, these paintings reveal a world that evenly balances horror and humor, ugliness and beauty. People become dolls, nuns become monsters, and everyone is utterly alone. Not only is everyone alone, but everything is alone as well. The brown bed, the plainly lit living room, and the waiting room door are all characters in this existential universe. In the same way Edward Hopper did it, Ottinger renders the space between her subjects as irreconcilable. The effect is surprisingly refreshing. *What to Do With Your Orphan: A Manual* runs through June 16. 510-444-9140 or JohanssonProjects.com — *Obi Kaufmann*

Obi Kaufmann

Ancillary Adaptations

[illegible] Miki creates [illegible] work that evades cliché at every turn. Whereas some may scoff that deer are the new bird — as in "put a bird on it" — Miki uses the animal in a fresh way. There is a strong psychology in exploring deer as a motif in fine art. When done right, the buck and the doe become at once a symbol of prey and capable defenders, regardless of gender. In *Ancillary Adaptations* at Swarm Gallery (560 2nd St., Oakland), Miki presents a multimedia exhibit of the life cycle of the deer, from its birth to its inescapable death. Miki's tenderly rendered illustrations, paintings, and sculpture deftly depict a grand zeitgeist. Thus, the deer becomes a metaphor of something inside each of us — a thing with antlers that's also vulnerable, a thing we trust to only the most capable artists. Through May 27. 510-839-2787 or SwarmGallery.com — *O.K.*

[illegible] With [illegible] of [illegible]. Through June 3. 2315 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-865-1436. SVDP-Alameda.org.

Richmond Art Center: [illegible]: A Ten Year Survey. With [illegible] clay figures that [illegible] Asian references with contemporary Western culture. In the Main Gallery. Through June 2. **In Conversation: [illegible] and John [illegible].** The first joint show [illegible] in the South Gallery. Through June 2. **The 47th Annual [illegible] Art Show.** Through June 2. 2540 Barrett Ave., Richmond. 510-620-6772. TheRichmondArtCenter.org.

San Pablo Art Gallery: Conversations. With paintings, prints, and mixed media by Sara Van [illegible], [illegible], and [illegible]. Through May 30. **Fluid Geometry.** With [illegible] by Jane [illegible], Tiffany Schmierer, and [illegible] Thomas. May 26-June 24. 13831 San Pablo Ave., San Pablo.

S.H.E.D. Projects: [illegible] With [illegible] works by Christopher [illegible]. May 26-June 9. [illegible] St., Oakland. ShedProjects.org.

SLATE contemporary: Urban Inhibitions. With works exploring the modern urban environment including photography by Carol Inez Charney, [illegible], and collage work by [illegible] and Kathleen Cook Smith. Through June 16. 473 25th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible]. SlateArtAndDesign.com.

[illegible] Gallery: WordPlay. With works [illegible] mediums, exploring [illegible] type, and written language by [illegible], Mary V. Marsh, and Susan Shoemaker. Through June 18. [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-[illegible].

StudioQuercus.com.

Swarm Studios + Gallery: [illegible] An exhibition by [illegible] in the project space. Through May 27. 560 2nd St., Oakland. 510-839-2787. SwarmGallery.com.

Triptych Contemporary: Strange Worlds/Bizarre Realities. With paintings by [illegible], watercolors by [illegible], manipulated photographs by [illegible], sculpture and [illegible] by [illegible], and works by [illegible]. Through June 30. 895 Colusa Ave., Berkeley. 510-527-1204. TriptychArt.com.

[illegible] Gallery: [illegible] A commemorative group show with works exploring [illegible] by Bryan [illegible], [illegible], and others. Through June 30. 472 25th St., Oakland. ●

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THEATER & DANCE

Sexphobias Make Intimate Theater

So says Donald Lacy at least.

Famous for his insightful and painful examination of race as a social construct in the play *Colorstruck*, Donald Lacy now thinks of himself, alternately, as a stand-up comedian, political monologist, and public intellectual. Thus far, much of his work has veered from personal experience to general observations, and from concrete reality to abstract notions. That was the path he took in *Colorstruck*, which used a series of autobiographical stories — including the fatal shooting of his sixteen-year-old daughter, LoEshé Adanma Lacy — to draw conclusions about race, violence, and the disparities of urban life. His new play, *Sexphobias*, has a lot more levity, but it also — bad pun alert — starts at an intimate place.

But this one is a little more anthropological in nature. Lacy says that the idea first germinated back in 2007 when he started noticing the degree to which his friends — most of whom are women, apparently — relied on social networks to mediate their relationships. "It's become convenient for people to kind of detach themselves from getting to know people," Lacy said, expressing his rather jaundiced view of the modern world. While that sentiment isn't particularly new, it's endlessly titillating.

Donald Lacy concludes that many women have a near-paralyzing fear of intimacy.

In fact, as conversation topics go, technology has almost as much sex appeal as — well, sex. So it's no surprise that a lot of people would take a prurient interest in *Sexphobias*. Lacy began working on the play in earnest around 2009. Over the course of two years he interviewed between 40 and 50 people, mostly women, mostly ages 35 to 50, about their Internet dating habits, their chatroom use, their hang-ups, and their sexual proclivities. He talked to a few staff members at the now-endangered Lusty Lady strip club, and asked for first-hand inferences about the clientele. He even did a little research by going into chatrooms himself.

His conclusions: Women (and a few men) in this particular age bracket have a near-paralyzing fear of intimacy. Enough that it's actually cause for concern, Lacy said. "My single women friends are afraid of who they sleep with and who they get involved with — they've become very discerning," he said. "Which is kind of sad to me."

It's debatable whether Lacy's sample size is large enough to draw any real conclusions about fear and alienation, and to what extent his friends have succumbed to their inhibitions. That said, his stories have become grist for some pointed humor. Under the tutelage of director Sean San José (who also helped develop the script for *Colorstruck*), Lacy created a single character to emblematize the concept of "sex phobia." It's really a composite of all the people he interviewed, with a little personal perspective thrown in. He premiered it to enthusiastic crowds last summer at The National Black Theatre Festival in North Carolina; he'll unveil it again at Black Repertory Theater (3201 Adeline St., Berkeley) Friday through Sunday, May 25-27. $25-$125. BlackRepertoryGroup.com

— *Rachel Swan*

PICKS

Company C Contemporary Ballet

In the lead-up to its tenth season, Company C shows its verve and versatility in a spring program that ranges from snappy jazz to modern dance. Fresh off a New York run, the company takes up residence at the Lesher Center for the Arts (1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek) on Friday through Sunday, May 25-27, to perform four favorite works from its expansive repertoire. The show starts with a trio of short pieces: Charles Anderson's Led Zeppelin-inspired *Song Remains the Same* and the moody *Key to Songs*, plus Joanna Sewell's bebop-beatnik charmer *Late*. The dancers travel longer arcs in Peter Anastos' effervescent *Footage*, a tongue-in-cheek Fred-and-Ginger homage complete with white tails and a battle of the sexes; and in *which light in the sky must*, a contemporary epic choreographed by San Francisco's Gregory Dawson. Fri. and Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 3 p.m. $23-$45. 925-943-7469 or CompanyCBallet.org. —*Charles Bower*

Company C.

COMEDY

Comedy at the Layover Weekly stand-up with rotating comedians. Ages 21 and up. Tuesdays, 8:30-10 p.m., free. The Layover, 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-834-1517. OaklandLayover.com.

Friday Night Comedy With a [illegible] of weekly comedians. Hosted by LeRoy Stanfield Jr. Fridays, 8 p.m. $8. GollabyProductions.com. Shine Broadway Theater, 3210 Adeline St., [illegible] 510-[illegible]

[illegible] With Anna Seregina, [illegible], Clare O'Kane, Bryant [illegible], Colleen [illegible], Trevor Hill, and Steven Lee. Hosted by Kelly [illegible]. Mon., May 28, 7-8:30 p.m., free. Farley's East, 33 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-835-5803. FarleysCoffee.com.

Laugh n' Play [illegible] local stand-up comedy, with music by [illegible] and food and drink. [illegible] Fourth and second Thursday of every month, 8:15 p.m. [illegible] Club Anton, 428 3rd St., Oakland. 510-[illegible] ClubAnton.com.

LGBT Show With Oakland Muse, [illegible], [illegible], and Justin Lucas. Hosted by Joe Gleckler and Sampson Oakland. Thu., May 24, 8 p.m. $15. 510-214-2006. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, @ Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-214-2006. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Marc Yaffee With B.B. Hunter, [illegible] Taylor, and Daniel Humbarger. Hosted by Joe Gleckler and Oakland [illegible]. Sat., May 26, 8 p.m., $18. 510-214-2006. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, @ Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-214-2006. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Open Mic Comedy A weekly open mic for both veteran and up-and-coming comedians. Sundays, 8 p.m., one-drink minimum. Continental Club, 1658 12th St., Oakland. 510-[illegible] ContinentalComedy.com.

[illegible] With [illegible] Robinson, Danny Allen, and Big Trav the Comic. Hosted by Joe Gleckler and Sampson Oakland. Sun., May 27, 8 p.m. $18. 510-214-2006. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, @ Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-214-2006. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

Say What? Comedy Improv Show With [illegible]. Saturdays, 8 p.m. $10. Pan Theater, 2135 Broadway, Oakland. 415-[illegible] PanTheater.com.

[illegible] With [illegible] Robinson, [illegible], and [illegible]. Hosted by Joe Gleckler and Oakland [illegible]. Fri., May 25, 8 p.m., $18. 510-214-2006. ComedyOffBroadwayOakland.com. Miss Pearl's Restaurant & Lounge (at the Waterfront Hotel), One Broadway, @ Jack London Square, Oakland. 510-214-2006. MissPearlsJamHouse.com.

[illegible] With [illegible] 1 Sat., May 26, 8 p.m., $15-$20. Englander Sports Pub, 101 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-3571. EnglanderPub.com.

[illegible] With [illegible] Sat., May 26, 8 p.m., $15-$20. Englander Sports Pub, 101 Parrott St., San Leandro. 510-357-3571. EnglanderPub.com.

Sunday Night Comedy and Poetry Hosted by LeRoy Stanfield Jr. Ages 21 and up. Sundays, 8 p.m. GollabyProductions. [illegible] Island Paradise Club, 1410 [illegible] St., Alameda. 510-866-3820. IslandParadiseClub.com.

Sylvan Productions Comedy Open mic, sign-ups at 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, [illegible] p.m., free. Vitus, 201 Broadway, Oakland. 510-[illegible] VitusOakland.com.

The Untold Story Improv [illegible]. Saturdays, 9 p.m. $10-$12. Pan Theater, 2135 Broadway, Oakland. 415-[illegible] PanTheater.com.

More Listings Online
Get info about dozens more theatrical events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

DANCE-PERFORMANCE

Compagnie 1273 [illegible] Oakland. A performance by the [illegible] dance company, accompanied by guitarist [illegible] and musician [illegible]. With a family dance workshop on May 27 from 11 a.m.-12:45 p.m. May 25-26, 8:30 p.m. [illegible] Arts Center, 521 [illegible] St., Oakland. 510-[illegible] TemescalArtsCenter.org.

Company C Contemporary Ballet Season finale includes performances of five favorite works, including Charles Anderson's *Song Remains the Same* and *Key to Songs*, Joanna Sewell's *Late*, Peter Anastos' *Footage*, and [illegible]. May 25-26, 8 p.m.; Sun., May 27, 3 p.m., $23-$45. Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469. CompanyCBallet.org.

[illegible] A dance-drama sharing Gandhi's message of "[illegible]," performed by [illegible] students from some of the largest [illegible] of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Sun., May 27, 6-7:30 p.m., free. [illegible] Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-[illegible] CalPerformances.org.

THEATER & PERFORMING ARTS

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee [illegible] Tony Award-winning musical about six kids vying for the title of spelling bee champion. Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. Continues through June 10. $20-$28. Chanticleers Theatre, 3683 Quail Ave., Castro Valley. 510-733-5483. Chanticleers.org.

Black n Blue Boys / Broken Men Chay Yew directs the world premiere of Dael Orlandersmith's play about [illegible] and boys forging identities in families fractured by abuse. Starting May 25. Sundays, 2 & 7 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 & 8 p.m.; Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m. Continues through June 24. $14.50-$73. Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-647-2949.

[illegible] The world premiere of *Ching Chong Chinaman* writer Lauren Yee's new comedy, directed by [illegible]. Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m. Continues through June [illegible]. $10-$20. [illegible] Theatre, [illegible] Ave., Berkeley. [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] one-man show chronicles his misadventures throughout the 1980s, from [illegible] Oakland, [illegible] and a giggle in his shirt as a live-in [illegible] at a retirement hotel. Saturdays, 8:30 p.m. [illegible], 7 p.m. Continues through June 10. $20-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-[illegible] TheMarsh.org.

[illegible] Ragged Wing Ensemble's season finale features excerpts from *A Fool's Errand*, *Atomic Ambition*, and *Maybe Baby*, [illegible] feature film combined with an immersive participatory pre-show. At the [illegible] in the [illegible] Center St., Berkeley, through May 28. 8 p.m.; Sun., May 28, 5 p.m., $15-$40. RaggedWing.org.

Journey The [illegible] Ballet presents an audience-participatory show [illegible] person [illegible] Oakland in search of [illegible]. At the [illegible] (2510 Grande Vista Ave., Oakland). Thu., May 24, 7-8 p.m., donations accepted. 510-[illegible]

Marga Gomez's Not Getting Any Younger Gomez's "coming of middle age" story about [illegible] her childhood [illegible] Bronx [illegible] Forever 21. Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 5 p.m. Continues through June 30. $15-$50. The Marsh Arts Center, 2120 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-[illegible] TheMarsh.org.

Pilipino Cultural Night The Pilipino American Student Association [illegible] student-generated [illegible] combined with traditional folk dance and contemporary pop culture. Fri., May 25, 7 p.m.; Sat., May 26, [illegible] p.m. [illegible] Cal State East Bay University Theatre, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3118. [illegible]

Playback Theater The Living Arts Playback Theater Ensemble [illegible] for the Berkeley Free Clinic, with stories from audience members transformed into improvised theater pieces. Sun., May 27, 8 p.m., $15-$20. [illegible] Subterranean Arthouse, 2179 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. SubterraneanArthouse.org.

Wish Upon a Star [illegible] hosts the sixth-annual Peter Pan Foundation musical. A fundraiser for Children's Hospital Oakland. Sat., May 26, 2 & 8 p.m.; May 27-28, 11 a.m., 2 & 7 p.m. $12-$35. PeterPanFoundation.org. Diablo Valley College Performing Arts Center, 321 Golf Club Rd., Pleasant Hill. 925-[illegible]

Xanadu Jeff Collister directs a Center Rep production of the Broadway musical [illegible] about a young [illegible] in Venice Beach, based on the hit 1980 film featuring Olivia Newton-John. Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m.; Thursdays, Fridays, 8 p.m.; Sat., May 26, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 2:30 & 8 p.m. Continues through June 23. $40-$47. CenterRep.org. Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-295-1400. LesherArtsCenter.org.

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July 27 West Coast Swing
Aug 3 Fox Trot
Aug 10 Night Club 2 Step
Aug 17 Cha Cha
Aug 24 Hustle
Aug 31 Salsa

LECTURES & LIT

Let's Talk About Sex

Eric Berkowitz illustrates how the punishment doesn't always fit the crime

"When people read about law," said Erik Berkowitz, "it's either sleazy or dry." So the Bay Area lawyer and author obligingly provides the best of both worlds with *Sex and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire*, a meticulous look into the evolution of sex law including detailed case studies brimming with raunchy tidbits, plus legal analysis to show how far we've come.

Someone once posed the question to Berkowitz: What was the first law? Ensuing research pointed to those written in ancient Mesopotamia. "Fully a third had to do with marital relations, adultery, sexual relations, and I thought — what's going on here?" From there on down the line, civilizations have enacted laws concerning incest, bestiality, sodomy, adultery, obscenity, and pornography. "A great deal of sex law is about belonging, and exclusion," Berkowitz explained. "People set strict rules of conduct to define themselves and to create cohesion."

Eric Berkowitz

His weighty book, which he will discuss on Wednesday, May 30, at Books Inc. (1760 Fourth St., Berkeley) is filled with tales of women chopped to bits and fed to the dogs for committing adultery, and of men flogged or hanged for sodomy and merely fined for rape. Concluding with the 1895 trial of Oscar Wilde, the book leaves unanswered perhaps the most interesting question for modern readers: How does historical enforcement and punishment relate to the world today? Think of recent cases like that of French politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn, accused of rape by a young African maid. In the US in the 1960s, when "most states didn't recognize that a husband could rape his wife," his arrest "would've been unimaginable," Berkowitz said. In that frame of mind, he explained, the politician would have been "simply taking what was his due, and I think we have a growing sense that the abuse of power along class lines for sexual ends is really slowly but surely no longer being tolerated." The Clinton saga and the Eliot Spitzer scandal are prime examples. "We have a sense now that once one is exposed for a private sexual habit, they're automatically disqualified for public service," the lawyer noted. Fifty years ago, that certainly wasn't the case for President John F. Kennedy.

Legal acceptance (or not) of same-sex relationships likewise has a long and storied history. Most civilizations didn't make homosexuality a crime until the word "sodomy" became associated with forbidden sex acts, Berkowitz said. The good news? Tolerance has improved over the ages. "We have to remember that issues like gay marriage didn't just emerge in the past five years," he said.

Berkowitz, who noted he has adopted feminist beliefs after providing legal aid to women in domestic violence and rape cases, is generally upbeat about the relationship between law and sex in American society today. "We're fortunate to live in this day and age where there are a lot of habits in law that have evolved in very positive directions." 7 p.m., free. 510-525-7777 or BooksInc.net

— *Alison Peters*

LECTURES

Oakland Bites: "The Basics of Medical Tourism" The librarian discusses the logistics of traveling to another country for a medical procedure or medication. Wed., May 30, 6-7:30 p.m. Oakland Public Library Main Branch, 125 14th St., Oakland. 510-238-3134. OaklandLibrary.org.

Ed E. [illegible]: "The Vinyl Cookbook" The owner of Funky Soul Drop Books plays [illegible] and answers questions [illegible] 45s and LPs. Sat., May 26, 2-3:30 p.m., [illegible] Oakland Public Library, Lakeview Branch, 550 El Embarcadero, Oakland. 510-238-7344. OaklandLibrary.org.

Enrico Moretti: "The New Geography of Jobs" The author discusses his book, an examination of the major shifts taking place in the US economy. Thu., May 24, 2 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777. BooksInc.net/Berkeley.

Eritrean Independence Day Discussion Oakland-based Eritrean-Americans share stories of Eritrea's decades-long struggle against colonization and occupation. Sat., May 26, 1-4:30 p.m. Oakland Public Library, [illegible] Branch, 5205 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-597-5048. OaklandLibrary.org.

Javier Sethness-Castro: "Imperiled Life: Revolution Against Climate Catastrophe" The author discusses his book, which takes a critical look at contemporary climate [illegible]. Mon., May 28, 7:30 p.m., donations [illegible]. Humanist Hall, 390 27th St., Oakland. 510-451-5818. HumanistHall.org.

Matthew [illegible]: "Jim and Jap Crow: A Cultural History of 1940's Interracial America" The assistant professor of American history at the University of Chicago discusses his book, which chronicles the experiences of Japanese American internee [illegible]. Fri., May 25, 4-5:30 p.m. University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585. UniversityPressBooks.com.

Paul W. Rea, Ph.D.: "Rebooting the War on Terror that Washington Still Wants to Wage" The lecturer offers his critique of the 9/11 Commission and [illegible] the "War on Terror." Thu., May 24, 6-8 p.m., $20 suggested donation. Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Ln., Walnut Creek.

Richard C. Bains: "Hitler, [illegible] and the Society of [illegible] War II" The professor emeritus of history discusses his recent research into how the [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] served as a [illegible]. Wed., May 30, 6:30 p.m. Cal State East Bay, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward. 510-885-3087. CSUEastBay.edu.

Sixth International Conference on Neuroesthetics: "The Importance of Being Playful" will feature a diverse group of speakers from the fields of neuroscience, evolutionary biology, law, art, and economics presenting their work on the science and culture [illegible]. Sat., May 26, 8:45 a.m.-5:40 p.m.; Sun., May 27, 8:45 a.m.-5:40 p.m. Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley, Berkeley.

Trish [illegible]: "Free to Be: [illegible] A Safe, Fun and Bully Free World" The author discusses her book about how to help young people who are experiencing bullying. Fri., May 25, 7-8 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

LITERARY EVENTS

B.O.P. Social [illegible] Book Society [illegible] Luisa [illegible]'s futuristic novel [illegible]. Ages 15 and up. Sun., May 27, 2 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226. BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Book into Film Discussion Group With a screening of Elia Kazan's film of the Betty Smith novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* followed by a discussion of the book. Sun., May 27, 1:30 p.m. Berkeley Public Library Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100. BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

[illegible] Borders: With [illegible] Literary Artist [illegible] With poet [illegible] Wai-Lee [illegible], singer/songwriter [illegible] Wang, an audience participatory poetry/songwriting [illegible] and more. Thu., May 24, 5:30-9 p.m. Oakland Asian Cultural Center, 388 9th St., Oakland. 510-637-0455. OACC.cc.

PICKS

Cindy Sheehan

Berkeley ant-war activist, Peace and Freedom Party nominee, and mom of fallen soldier Casey Berkeley resident Cindy Sheehan celebrates her new book, *Revolution, A Love Story*. The book is the story of Sheehan's experiences and insights in community organizing from Cuba and Venezuela (where she interviewed president Hugo Chávez), and a love letter to the people of both countries. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. to break bread, potluck-style. At Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists Hall (1924 Cedar St., Berkeley) on Thursday, May 24, 7 p.m. $5-$10 suggested donation. 510-841-4824 or BFUU.org. —*Alison Peters*

First Person Singular

This Memorial Day, remember and relive Johnny Cash's electrifying San Quentin performance, courtesy of First Person Singular, continuing its 2012 *Apocalypse Not Now* season. Lip-synch along with award-winning composer/actor Josh Pollack and the East Bay Three in a dramatic reinterpretation of the 1969 concert/album at the Shotgun Cabaret's off-mainstage (but still fully Equity-licensed) event. At The Ashby Stage (1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley) on Monday, May 28, 8 p.m. $15. 510-841-6500 or ShotgunPlayers.org. —*A.P.*

Melanie Gideon

Melanie Gideon

If you liked *Bridget Jones' Diary*, you'll want to check out Melanie Gideon's *Wife 22* — a Bridget Jones for the American soccer-mom set. When Alice Buckle takes time off from shuttling kids and making meals to respond to an online survey titled "Marriage in the 21st Century," she has no idea how her life is about to change. Forced to examine her relationships and decisions, and given her titular "Wife 22" pseudonym, her correspondence with Researcher 101 becomes ... well, let's just say it's complicated. At A Great Good Place for Books (6120 LaSalle Ave., Oakland) on Tuesday, May 29, 7 p.m., free. 510-339-8210 or GreatGoodPlace.indiebound.com. —*A.P.*

Hideo's Blackwell

Calling all video game and Japanese anime fans! Here's your chance to go behind the scenes of Hideo, the play-turned full-scale theatrical-concert featuring music from your favorite games. Come to the gallery reception and launch party and get your copy of *Blackwell*, the comic saga about the city behind the adventures. Released in volumes for each main character (Hideo, Satoshi and Reena), *Blackwell* is the first Hideo graphic novel. Art from the production will be on display, comics will be for sale, and you might even get to meet the creators of the multimedia series: Dan Howard, Jessica Fong, and Christine Liao. At Books Inc. (1760 Fourth St., Berkeley) on Monday, May 28, 5 p.m. free. 510-525-7777 or BooksInc.net. —*A.P.*

Desert Books: Book Five Discussing Books Hill's Gay Yet and by Francis Ray's 16th Just One Kiss. Thu., May 24, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226, BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Elizabeth Fiore, Maureen Hallerberg, and Max Kenneberg Reading from their respective works of poetry. Thu., May 24, 7:30 p.m. Moe's Books, 2476 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2087. MoesBooks.com.

More Listings Online

Get info for [illegible] literary events at EastBayExpress.com or m.EastBayExpress.com

Eric Barkowski Discussing his book *Sin and Punishment: Four Thousand Years of Judging Desire*. Wed., May 30, 7 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777, BooksInc.net/Berkeley.

A Few Good Men Series: The Vets Book Vietnam John Francon discussing his Book *US Army Helicopter Names in Vietnam*, and Robert Flasher reads from his novel *The Return of Private Flasher*. Sat., May 26, 7-9 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226, Alameda.net. Alameda.

First Person Singular's Wanted Man: Johnny Cash at San Quentin With a reinterpretation of the classic 1969 album and concert, performed by Josh Pollack and The East Bay Three. Mon., May 28, 8 p.m. $15. 1stPersonSingular.com. Ashby Stage, 1901 Ashby Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-6500. ShotgunPlayers.org.

Free Book Exchange Give and get free Books of all genres. Saturdays, Sundays, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. free. 510-705-1200, BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com. Bay Area Free Book Exchange, 10520 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito. 510-705-1200. BayAreaFreeBookExchange.com.

Gallery Reception and Books Book Launch Party For "The Art and Story of Hideo," with artwork by Dan Howard, Jessica Fong, and Christine Liao. Mon., May 28, 5 p.m. Books Inc. Berkeley, 1760 Fourth St., Berkeley. 510-525-7777, BooksInc.net, Berkeley.

Hoda Wooded With a talk by the author of *Rising From Tahrir*. Sat., May 26, 8 p.m. Mo Cow Books & Gallery, 3411 [illegible] BooksInc. Vietnam 510-834-2788. 3411CowBooks.com.

Hella Book and Spokenly II Thursdays Open mic poetry, followed at 10:30 p.m. by dancing, poetry, rap, food, live DJs, and more. Thursdays, 7:30 p.m. donations. Alameda, Vietnam Cultural Center, 2277 International Blvd., Vietnam. 510-533-9820. EastsideArtsAlliance.com.

[illegible] Books Reading from her Book. Open a Story. Thu., May 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m. University Press Books, 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-548-0585, UniversityPressBooks.com.

Playreaders A weekly group for adults to read aloud from great plays, changing parts frequently. Meets in the Books from Story Room. Wednesdays, noon. Berkeley Public Library Central Branch, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley. 510-981-6100, BerkeleyPublicLibrary.org.

Sharing Books We Love Class members take turns discussing a book that inspired them. Led by Cyrell Olmos. Last Wednesday of every month. 12:30 p.m. $5 suggested donation. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302, UUCB.org.

Uniquely Yours: A Books Windows Vietnam Writing Workshop Author Peggy Simmons leads a workshop for writers of all levels, experiences, and genres, ages 16 and up. Drop-ins welcome, long-term participation encouraged. Fourth Sunday of every month. 7-8:30 p.m. $8-$25. CreativeSouthbrook.org. Rock Paper Scissors Collective, 2278 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-238-9171. RPSCollective.com.

Will Vinson and Scott Fields Discussing their novel *It Came From Hangar 18*. Wed., May 30, 7-8 p.m. Books Inc. Alameda, 1344 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-2226, BooksInc.net/Alameda.

Write for Your Life Writing, as meditation, whereby participants write in Alameda, in a reading at the beginning of the session. Meeting about in the group in Vietnam. Mondays, 9:15-11:45 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1 Lawson Rd., Berkeley. 510-525-0302, UUCB.org.

W.S. di Piero Reading from his Book of poetry, *Nitro Nights*. Thu., May 24, 7:30-9 p.m. Mrs. Dalloway's, 2904 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-704-8222, MrsDalloways.com.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Eastmont Computer Clubhouse Showcase and Open House With treats showcasing the digital media after-school program for low-income youth ages 10-18. Thu., May 24, 5-7 p.m. free. OCCUR Eastmont Technology Center, 6948 Foothill Blvd., Oakland. 510-562-[illegible]. Eastmont.net.

Public Discussion: The Plastic Plague: Problems and What We Can Do With farmer [illegible], psychologist, and professor [illegible] and Beth Terry, author of *Plastic Free: How I Kicked the Plastic Habit and How You Can Too*. Thu., May 24, 7-9 p.m. Ecology Center, 2530 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-2220, EcologyCenter.org.

SPOKEN WORD

The Oakland Slam With spoken word and a live improvisational band, co-hosted by Bobby Gomez, the Jamie DeWolf, Saxon, and Katelyn Lucas. Up to $150 in cash prizes. Wed., May 30, 8 p.m. $8. Starry Plough, 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082. StarryPloughPub.com.

The Blue Candle A weekly open mic for up-and-coming spoken word artists, poets, and comedians. Sign-up begins at 8 p.m. Tuesdays, 8:30 p.m. free. Dorsey's Locker, 5817 Shattuck Ave., Oakland. 510-428-1935. DorseysLocker.com.

Saturday Night Speakin' East Bay Open Mic A monthly open mic hosted by Nellie Hardy and Parisa Monet. Last Saturday of every month. 9 p.m. free. Nick's Lounge, 3218 Adeline St., Berkeley. 510-652-6425. NicksLounge.com.

Written Word Art Open-Mic Night Poets, storytellers, musicians, and all other artists are invited to share their work. Arrive early to sign up. Second and fourth Friday of every month. 7:30 p.m. free. Facebook/WrittenWordArt.com, WrittenWordArt.com. Vibes Coffeehouse, 845 Washington Ave., San Leandro. 510-500-6102. JazzVibesCoffeehouse.com. ◆

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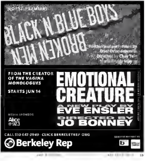

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BLACK OAK STAFF PICKS

The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction

By Morris Rossabi

$11.95

I have fallen in love with Daenerys Targaryen (Khaleesi of the Dothraki in the Game of Thrones opus) and wanted to find out more about the Mongols, since the Dothraki are so closely patterned after them. And the first place I turn to when I want more than a Wikipedia level introduction to a topic is the Oxford Very Short Introduction series. With more than 300 of them there is a good chance my hunt will be successful as it was here. This is a wonderful introduction to the Mongols from Genghis' time up to around the beginning of the 15th century when they had splintered but nonetheless controlled an empire that stretched from Arabia to China.

Published by Oxford University Press, 5/4/12

America's Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas and the Compromise That Preserved the Union

By Fergus M. Bordewich

$30.00

The compromise of 1850, architected by Henry Clay, postponed the civil war for 10 years by coming up with a way to let California enter the union and still patch over the differences between North and South. Bordewich's retelling of the tale of the men involved and what they thought, said and did is hard to put down. It is narrative history at its best. These men were giants and while some used their gifts for good, others like Calhoun and Slave used theirs to serve evil incarnate, but oh how fascinating is the tale.

Published by Simon & Schuster, 4/17/12

Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable

By Samuel Beckett

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A classic that is worth returning to again and again. If you're looking for a mind blowing summer read—one that won't leave you the way it found you—look no longer. Samuel Beckett's trilogy of novels (Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnamable) is available in one volume from Grove Press for only $15.95. These masterful works of prose appeared in the same period as Beckett's celebrated dramas Godot and Endgame, and they pack the same tragicomic pathos. Step by step for the most shattering beach read of all time—in a good way!

Published by Grove Press, 8/16/09

LAUREL BOOKSTORE STAFF PICKS

Oakland: The Story of a City

By Beth Bagwell

Edited by Erika Mailman

$22.95

After a very long absence, this definitive history of Oakland is back. Erika Mailman has edited the second edition and added a new chapter. This is a must have for Bay Area history fans and the many lovers of Oakland who want to know more about the city.

Published by Oakland Heritage Alliance, 5/2012

The Queen of Whale Cay: The Eccentric Story of "Joe" Carstairs, Fastest Woman on Water

By Kate Summerscale

$17.00

Joe Carstairs was renowned in the 1920's as an 'invert' who smoked cheroots and dressed as a man. She was an heiress to the Standard Oil fortune and the world's fastest speedboat racer. In 1934 she bought an island in the West Indies and created her own kingdom. She entertained actresses, duchesses and pirates, but reserved her greatest love for her boats, her cars and the enigmatic Lord Tod Wadley. When Carstairs died in 1993, aged 93, she was all but forgotten.

Published by Bloomsbury, 4/2003

Atomic Mom: A Documentary Film

By M.T. Silvia

$25.50

Yes, a movie. M.T. Silvia (Rowdy Drive) has created an amazing and touching film featuring her mother Pauline, who at 20 was a Navy biologist in the early 50's and was sent to the Nevada Test Site where she participated in five detonations. In an attempt to reconcile with her own mother's past, M.T. meets Emiko Okada, a Hiroshima survivor trying to resolve her own history in Japan. It's a beautiful and hopeful story, not to be missed.

Distributed by Women Making Movies

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The roasted chicken was pure magic. Chris Duffey

ALAMEDA GETS A GASTROPUB

Small-town whiskey saloon American Oak provides an unexpected setting for big-city cooking chops

By Luke Tsai

If you eat out often enough in the East Bay, it's easy to start painting different neighborhoods and municipalities with broad strokes. Walnut Creek is strip malls and chain restaurants; the outer edges of Temescal a hotbed for divey ethnic eateries; El Cerrito a great place for offbeat Chinese. Fruitvale is, of course, Fruitvale.

And what about sleepy Alameda, that bastion of quaint Americana and hard-to-find street parking? I ought to know better, but I still mostly think of the island as a place to get above-average Asian food.

Enter American Oak, an unobtrusive whiskey bar on one of the Park Street corridor's quieter blocks, where Chef Gabe Cortez is slinging cassoulets and wagyu burgers and wood-fired pizzas — fun, approachable gastropub fare that matches and often outshines its more acclaimed counterparts in Oakland and across the bay.

Inside, American Oak is set up like an old-fashioned saloon, with high ceilings, well-worn floorboards, and a color scheme that features several shades of brown. Adding to the effect, a disproportionate number of the employees sport scraggly, impressive-looking beards. There are high-top tables in front for bar patrons, but most of the seating is along one wall, tucked under the overhang of an unused balcony section, so you end up feeling like you're dining in a private little nook. Almost every table has a clear view of the brightly lit open kitchen, where Cortez does his thing.

Until this past January, the place was called BarCeltona and was focused on the world-class collection of whiskeys — well over one hundred of them — that co-owner Melanie Hartman had assembled. Back then, the restaurant was serving tapas, mostly, and it seemed to Hartman that there was a disconnect. It wasn't food that was meant to go with whiskey. At that point she'd already hired Cortez, who had cut his teeth cooking at Boulevard in San Francisco for five years. His task? To create a new and improved drinking-friendly menu for the restaurant's relaunch as (the much better-named) American Oak.

Cortez' menu is a mix of updated American comfort food and French bistro fare — an approach that in and of itself isn't especially original. But what sets the food at American Oak apart is the skillful execution of each dish and a smattering of unexpectedly playful touches.

Take the variety of bar snacks listed on the menu, for example, which are available at a discounted price during Happy Hour from 5:30 to 6:30 each evening. Deviled Green Eggs and Ham were a fun riff on traditional deviled eggs: a creamy avocado filling for a lighter touch, and sprinkled bits of fried prosciutto to add crunchy-savory depth. And the "chick-a-rones" (fried chicken skin, basically) were pure deep-fried goodness, greasy and addictive. These were served like French fries in a paper cone and came with two dipping sauces: blue cheese and a cayenne hot sauce. Altogether, they made for a thoroughly enjoyable riff on Buffalo chicken wings — with or without a cold beer or a shot of whiskey to chase it down.

When it comes to the main courses, Cortez' weapon of choice is a wood-burning oven that gets as hot as 900 degrees. Put half a deboned Mary's Free Range chicken in that oven, skin-down in a cast iron skillet, and the results are magic: skin so crisp that some diners wonder if it's fried, and meat that's uniformly juicy and tender. Everything else on the plate is just right, too — radicchio cooked until only a trace of its bitter edge remains, roasted garlic cloves, fingerling potatoes, and a light Dijon jus. Simple as it was, this was as good a chicken dish as I've eaten in months.

The oven also allows Cortez to put out a better Napoli-style pizza than anyone is likely to expect from a non-Italian restaurant. During my second visit, I ordered the Margherita, which came out beautifully blistered, dotted with charred bubbles that puffed up here and there. The texture was fantastic. Yes, the crust was dusted with too much flour, and the tomato sauce didn't quite have the brightness of flavor I was looking for — but these were minor offenses. Whole sprigs of dried oregano, to crush and sprinkle onto the pizza yourself, added a touch of elegance to the presentation.

Finally, lest anyone mistake the food at American Oak for typical pub grub, consider Cortez' take on "Pork and Beans." In making a riff on the traditional Spanish white-bean-and-chorizo stew *fabada* (as opposed to the humdrum American version a cowboy might order in a real old-time saloon), Cortez ups the ante by adding a big hunk of pork belly — as tender and crisp-skinned and full of sticky, gelatinous bits as Chinese roast pig. Like many of American Oak's offerings, this was a hearty, stick-to-your-ribs kind of dish.

Indeed, with all that fatty meat, a salad might be in order. The chopped salad on the menu this month was a classic taste of spring (asparagus, sugar snaps, goat cheese) with two bold additions: toasted sunflower seeds for a nutty crunch and anchovy fillets for an extra savory punch.

For his part, Cortez says it annoys him to no end when people say, "I can't believe you're doing this in Alameda." Even though he's a "city chef," if there is such a thing — he lived and cooked in San Francisco for years — Cortez has embraced the small-town charm of his new community. So he uses Alameda vendors whenever he can: a Feel Good Bakery bun for his burger and, for dessert, ice cream from Tucker's right down the street — on top of a decadent chocolate Belgian waffle, or as part of a classic root beer float.

"We're doing it in Alameda," Cortez said. "Alameda could use a good restaurant." ●

Luke.Tsai@EastBayExpress.com

American Oak

2319 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda
510-521-5962
Hours: Tues.-Thurs. 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.; Fri.-Sat. 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m.
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Sample Menu

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The Rising Loafer Cafe & Bakery
Torrey Pines Bank
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Waypoint Real Estate Group
Yoga College of India

CONGRATULATIONS to the Socially-Responsible Rockstar & Ripple Effect Nominees!

We received over 200 nominations for local, independent businesses and artists that YOU THINK are revolutionary and enrich our city! This week we're showcasing the nominees in two of the award categories. Check 'em out!

Come celebrate! *and congratulate all of our nominees! Enjoy live drumming performances, a DIY cupcake bar, a People's Bazaar, custom T-shirt screen printing, a life- sized Polaroid photo booth, a live mural, a cool auction and a revolutionary art exhibit to activate the revolutionary in you!*

Get your tickets: oaklandindieawards.com

Ripple Effect Nominees

support other local businesses and artists by "shopping local" for their supplies and services, creating an economic ripple effect as money circulates within the community

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- Bells and Whistles
- Betti Ono Gallery
- Bittersweet Cafe
- Brown Sugar
- Chthonic Theater
- CommonWealth Cafe & Pub House
- Debbie Does Cakes
- Doc's of the Bay
- Entrez! Open House
- Eric Murphy
- Feelmore 510
- Hal's Original NY Hot Dog Cart
- House Kombucha
- J's Creations
- Joyce Gordon Gallery
- KaMasaJél BioDynamics & Massage
- Lea Sweet
- Lea Krasnow
- Little Shop Artisan Box
- Mandela Marketplace
- Meagan Reelitz Designs
- Noble Cafe
- Oakland Venue Management
- Taco Grill Taqueria & Pozoleria
- Tech Liminal
- The Layover Music Bar & Art Lounge
- Urban Indigo
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WHAT THE FORK

SCOURING THE OAKLAND COLISEUM FOR A DECENT MEAL

Plus kitchen fires take popular Chinese restaurants out of commission

By Luke Tsai

A couple weeks ago I headed over to the Coliseum to catch an A's game, taking advantage of the $2 ticket deal they have on Wednesdays. While I was there, I hoped to snag something decent to eat and, for the love of Billy Beane, I didn't want to pay "big market" prices.

Alas, times are tough for fans looking for even an adequate meal at the ballpark. It's not just that options at the Aramark-run concessions stands are mostly limited to overcooked burgers, limp hot dogs, and sad little frozen pizzas. And it's not just that everything is overpriced.

No, the most depressing part was the overwhelming sameness of it all. Walking through the field level "food court," I passed stand after redundant stand — one that was only labeled "Heineken" sold French fries and popcorn chicken; another that was marked "Dreyer's Ice Cream" specialized in barbecue. There wasn't any rhyme or reason to any of it.

But the fact remained that I needed some lunch. So I ventured upstairs to the West Side Club for a glimpse of how the other half lives — you know, the other half that can afford tickets that cost more than $2. Here, the clientele gave off a genteel white-collar vibe, and the overall atmosphere was reminiscent of a Holiday Inn lobby, complete with tinkly piano music. Along one wall were black-and-white photos of great moments in Oakland sports; on the other side were tables that overlooked the field, affording diners a view of the action below — to sit there, you need to eat at the Club's full-service restaurant.

Instead, I took my chances at Deli 215, a takeout counter whose advantages included the fact that the line was significantly shorter than the ones downstairs. The prices weren't cheap, but I figured I'd rather pay $9 for cold cuts than fork over a comparable amount for greasy mystery meat downstairs. I opted for the classy-sounding "Piedmont," a basic turkey sandwich. To round out my meal, I picked up an order of garlic fries ($6) downstairs.

The verdict? The fries were rubbery and stone-cold, having sat pre-apportioned for Lord knows how long. The chopped garlic was the kind that comes from a jar. But I won't lie, I ate about half of it — I'll eat anything that's smeared with enough garlic.

The sandwich was, above all else, dry. It featured the kind of turkey meat that turns straight to dust in your mouth. This was topped with lettuce, tomato, grayish pickled red onions, plasticky Swiss cheese, and an avocado spread. The spread sounded nice, but honestly, I couldn't taste it. My kingdom for a dollop of mayo.

Anyway, if you set Subway as your bar, you won't be too disappointed.

I went home reasonably sated and "only" $15 poorer, but determined to learn from my mistake. Next time I head to the ballpark, I'll pack a picnic.

Recovery Slow for Fire-Ravaged Chinese Restaurants

Did someone anger the gods of Chinese cookery? How else to explain the spate of kitchen fires that have knocked out three of the East Bay's better Chinese restaurants?

It started with the oft-overlooked L & L Chinese Seafood Restaurant (10140 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito), which had been one of my favorite spots for low-key dim sum (including some of the tastiest turnip cakes you'll find).

But in late February of last year, an employee accidentally locked himself inside the restaurant's walk-in freezer after he'd put a pot of oil on the stove. The subsequent fire destroyed the kitchen and shut L & L down indefinitely, according to El Cerrito Patch.

Next to get hit was longtime Berkeley fave Great China (2115 Kittredge St., Berkeley), purveyor of maybe the best Peking duck I've had on this side of the Pacific. In January — a couple days into the Chinese New Year, of all times — hot oil got into the restaurant's kitchen fire system and ignited, *The Daily Cal* reported. The Berkeley Fire Department got the flames under control, but not before extensive damage was sustained.

Finally, at China Village (1335 Solano Ave., Albany), Sichuan specialist extraordinaire, a fire started in March during the restaurant's semi-annual cleaning and degreasing of its kitchen.

All in all, it's been quite the series of unfortunate events, and the restaurants have been slow to recover. Though China Village had planned to reopen within weeks, the restaurant eventually put a message on its answering machine alluding to an extensive three- to four-month remodel. But Tien Yao, wife of chef-owner John Yao, told me that permit requirements by the health and building departments have pushed the project back even further. Now a September re-opening is most likely, she said.

At L & L, an employee who answered the phone when I called last week said the restaurant planned to reopen by the end of June — after having been closed for well over a year.

Meanwhile, James Yu, Great China's wine guru and second-generation co-owner, is working as a manager at the nearby Revival Bar & Kitchen while his own restaurant is out of commission. Yu told me repairs haven't even begun — only design work. The problem is that the building itself is old and not up to code, and that needs to be addressed before construction can begin in earnest. ●

Luke.Tsai@EastBayExpress.com

This column is culled from our blog of the same name.

RESTAURANTS & CAFES

Brewpubs & New American

Buffalo Bill's Brewery

1082 B St., Hayward, 510-886-9823. Buffalo Bill's has a lot of space — and it's filled up with families and beerhounds on weekends. The short, kid-friendly menu of salads, sandwiches, and pizzas would never qualify as gourmet, but the cooks take the ingredients from garden to table, not just the freezer to the fryer. Bring a designated driver 'because Bill's beer is too good for you to stop at one pint. $

Chop Bar

247 4th St., Oakland, 510-834-2467. This jazzy, planked-wood Oakland cafe is one of the Bay Area's coolest hangouts. The cuisine (hearty American fare with a few Mediterranean accents) isn't always up to the setting, but the luscious pork shank with figs and apricots, the potato gratin with Fiscalini cheddar, and a pot de crème touched with cinnamon are delectable. $$

Disco Volante

347 14th St., Oakland, 510-663-0271. This festive downtown nightspot/restaurant serves an all-day bistro menu of intriguing Californian fare in creations like tender smoky pork ribs with spicy cabbage and fresh pineapple, and tacos stuffed with tempura avocado and jicama slaw, plus a daily-changing menu of dinnertime specials. The dense chewy coffee flan is a weird and wonderful dessert, the beer list is impressive indeed, and the kitchen is open until at least midnight seven nights a week. $$

FIVE

2086 Allston Way, Berkeley, 510-225-6055. Chef Scott Howard coaxes fresh, vibrant flavors out of classic American dishes at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza's fantastically appointed restaurant. Local, organic, absolutely fresh ingredients star in dishes like roasted oysters with spinach and brandy; crisply fried squash blossoms stuffed with goat cheese; lamb loin wrapped in chèvre, spinach, and panko crumbs; and a lush butterscotch pudding stuffed with crunchy peanut brittle. $$$$

Freehouse

2700 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-647-2300. After Daryl Ross shut down struggling, yet-beloved *Adagia*, he decided to give the sophisticated farm-to-table spot a total overhaul. What emerged is *Freehouse*, a campus brewpub at the end of a row of frats. The menu still has whispers of its former greatness, and quality ingredients are clearly a priority to chef Kevin Kroger (Mark's Kettle), but much of the pub grub is flawed or just uninteresting. The menu is almost beside the point, though. A bar/restaurant this close to campus, dramatically housed in a former church, has a student fanbase practically built in. $$

Grand Tavern

3601 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-444-1644. Hearty comfort-food classics like chili, ratatouille, lamb shank, and rice pudding are jazzed up with delectable Afghan accents at this friendly, down-home Oakland hangout. The vegetarian appetizers — mashed carrots, puréed squash, roasted spinach — are surprisingly delectable, and the lamb is a luscious, slow-cooked dream. Get the rhubarb with ice cream for dessert. Exceptional Belgian beer list. $$$

Henry's Publick House & Grille

2600 Durant Ave., Berkeley, 510-809-4132. The gastropub concept (bars that prepare and serve top-shelf grub) comes to Berkeley in the form of this handsomely accented and newly renovated UC hangout. Outstanding bar snacks include nine-spice roasted nuts and luscious, spicy turmeric-ginger mushrooms; more substantial fare includes an exemplary Cuban sandwich, a zesty grilled steak salad Niçoise, and the spicy, satisfying Angry Mac and Cheese. Among the imaginative house cocktails are a refreshing grapefruit-infused negroni and the Hot Flash, Herradura tequila jazzed with mint, cilantro and ginger beer. The stone fruit-berry crumble makes a fine summertime dessert. $$

Homeroom

400 40th St., Oakland, 510-597-0400. Co-owners Erin Wade and Allison Arevalo wanted to open a restaurant together — but, due to their limited experience, felt the restaurant should have a narrow focus. They settled on macaroni and cheese. At Homeroom, it comes in several different savvy styles augmented with such novelties as jalapeño pepper Vermont white Cheddar, Cypress Grove fresh goat's-milk cheese, Niman Ranch chorizo and hot dogs, and even potato chips. A vegan version is a standout, made with no cheese at all, not even vegan cheese, but a smooth melange of tofu, soy milk, soy sauce, and yeast. $

Hudson

5356 College Ave., Oakland, 510-595-4000. Rockridge's ever-popular Marzano/Garibaldi's complex has spawned a casually elegant Italian-oriented New American hangout complete with cocktail lounge, housemade Meyer lemon tagliatelle, and truffled Yukon Gold potato cakes. Some of the dishes are overly fussy but the mussel-calamari plate, the duck breast with pumpkin spaetzle, the Niçoise bass with sherry brown butter, and the salted chocolate ganache tart with olive oil ice cream are delectable. Phantasmagoric cocktail menu; starkly cool setting. $$$

Jupiter

2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-843-8277. Just a stone's throw from UC Berkeley, the local talent checks itself out at this upstairs-downstairs-and-outdoors pub, washing down wood-fired pizza, focaccia sandwiches, and salads with the outpourings of 32 taps, including 9 brews made right here. A crackling open fire on the patio out back perfumes the air for a city block, helping make this a first date fave. $$

Luka's Taproom & Lounge

2221 Broadway, Oakland, 510-451-4677. From [illegible] to [illegible] all, Luka's has it going on: Spiffed-up professionals, club kids, retirees, moms comfortably set it up at this stylish bar, restaurant, and club. Claiming a California brasserie theme, the menu showcases [illegible] Belgian beers, mussels, and frites — some of the best in Oakland. The creatively conceived entrées sometimes read better than they taste, but the cooks deliver on the basics, and it's hard to find anywhere else downtown where you can eat so well after nine. $$-$$$

Make Westing

1741 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, 510-251-1400. Make Westing has an industrial Brooklyn aesthetic and a bocce court in the corner: two ingredients that help make it one of the darlings in Uptown's renaissance. Cocktails are cheaper than at neighbors like Flora and Dogwood, though not as fancy. In a tiny micro-space behind the bar chef Melinda Vaca (formerly of Sea Salt) cranks out remarkably tasty pub fare, like sturgeon confit in a jar with leeks and lemon peel, or a bahn mi with wild mushroom pate, sweet and sour kohlrabi, and maple sugar aioli. $$

Meritage

41 Tunnel Rd., Berkeley, 510-549-8510. Serving what executive chef Josh Thomsen calls "seasonal farm-to-table cuisine" at the Claremont Hotel Club & Spa, Meritage commands one of the East Bay's most historic and highly prized views: a surrealistically supersized panorama that starts with tennis courts and venerable Canary Island palms, then displays Berkeley as a glittering fairy-tale village. Bridges, silver-blue bay peaks, and metropolis shimmer beyond, under a sky so wide and high as to coax you into believing God exists. Its dinner menus feature 98 percent locally sourced dishes paired with wines in at least ten different categories. But the Meritage's most popular meal — and deservedly so — is its glorious Sunday champagne brunch. A guilty pleasure of buffets is that they don't just let you eat your fill: They let you eat, together

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RECENTLY REVIEWED

Nature Vegetarian Restaurant

2116 Franklin St., Oakland, 510-238-0688. The Chinese have a long and comfortable history of mock-meat consumption, harkening back to food served to alms-givers at Buddhist temples a thousand years ago. And diners craving vegetarian versions of their favorite Chinese dishes would be hard-pressed to find a better option than Nature Vegetarian Restaurant, where chef-owner Hua Liu, a devout Buddhist himself, makes all of the restaurant's gluten- and soy-based meat substitutes in-house. Menu highlights include the spectacularly crispy sesame "chicken" and stuffed eggplant that's batter-fried, shaped like a whole fish, and carved tableside. During off-peak hours, vegetarian versions of traditional dim sum items (roast pork buns, siu mai, etc.) are served. The dining room is clean and pleasant, and service is polite and reasonably English friendly. $-$$

Divino

140 University Ave., Berkeley, 510-841-5200. For a place that prides itself on serving seasonal and local comfort food — all those of-the-moment buzzwords, with gluten-free pizza to boot — Berkeley's Divino is refreshingly devoid of self-importance. Executive chef Jean Gallagher serves unfussy Italian fare in a warm and welcoming setting. As a general rule of thumb, the simplest menu items tend to be best. Highlights include the fresh pastas, the *suppli* (fried risotto balls), and the housemade Italian sodas. The pastas and pizzas all come in both regular and gluten-free versions, and many dishes can be prepared vegan upon request. The Sunday brunch menu, meanwhile, is more classic American than Italian. Oh, and there's this: Divino might just be the kid-friendliest nice restaurant in Berkeley. $$-$$$

Homeroom Racing Cafe

1319 Park St., Alameda, 510-865-6290. Kids and hobbyists gravitate toward the model-sized Grand Prix racetrack in the back room while hungry diners dig into chef Anita Saengchan's home-style Thai cuisine up front. Saengchan's "country-style" Thai cooking isn't especially fancy or challenging to the Western palate, but it is abundant with herbs and aromatics, everything well-executed and freshly prepared. The papaya salad impresses with bright flavors while the herbaceous off-menu rice soup is the perfect "sick person's food," especially if you're a cilantro lover. For something unique, try the spicy Thai-style burger: the kind of East-West mash-up you might imagine pulling off the grill at some Thai-American family's backyard barbecue. Don't forget to check out the slot-car racing in back — $5 buys fifteen minutes of an unmeasureable amount of fun. $

Wally's Cafe

1300 San Pablo Ave., Emeryville, 510-547-1300. Wally's Cafe is perfectly aligned to attract 90 percent of the East Bay's iPhone picture-snapping food blogosphere, with its obscure location tucked behind an Emeryville roadhouse-style dive bar; its free baklava and lentil soup with every order; and its sometimes-available secret menu prepared by Wally's Mexican wife. But the best reason to visit Wally's is simply solidly prepared, reasonably priced Lebanese and Greek cuisine, with some American stuff thrown in. $$

Freehouse

2700 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, 510-647-2300. After Daryl Ross shut down struggling-yet-beloved Adagia, he decided to give the sophisticated farm-to-table spot a total overhaul. What emerged is Freehouse, a campus brewpub at the end of a year of trials. The menu still has whispers of its former greatness, and quality ingredients are clearly a priority to chef Kevin Kruger (Monk's Kettle), but much of the pub grub is flawed or just uninteresting. The menu is almost beside the point, though. A bar/restaurant this close to campus, dramatically housed in a former church, has a student fanbase practically built in. $$

Rotten City Pizza

6613 Hollis St., Emeryville, 510-655-2489. Emeryville's reigning pizza champ is a hybrid, merging the New York-style slice aspirations of Brooklyn-born Jonas Bernstein with the Cal-cuisine pedigree of Chef John Streit (Pizzaiolo, Pizzeria Delfina). The bases don't quite hold up, with the thin crust on the margherita not able to withstand the thick coating of sauce. But once Streit starts working his magic on the combos, look out. The Calabrian pizza is a must-have, with house-made Italian sausage, Gaeta olives (striking, though milder than a Kalamata), potent Calabrian chilies, and a sprinkling of toasted fennel seeds. $$

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foods that society deems should never meet. At cheap buffets, this means chow mein and chili mac. At Meritage, it means French croissants and Chinese steamed water-chestnut dumplings and prime rib. $$

Plum Bar

2216 Broadway, Oakland, 510-444-7586. Plum Bar is the newer lo-fi appendage to its namesake restaurant next door. Interiors heavy on succulents and tea lights, neutral-toned, and wallpapered with poetry from Kerouac and cummings. Executive chef Ron Boyd designs a distinct menu for Plum Bar, patterned after the staff meals in his kitchen. The result is well-designed rib-sticking fare, a posh riposte to classic American bar food (e.g., fried pig's ears, Brussels sprouts, chicken skin, and beef tendon *chicharrón*). $$

Revival Bar & Kitchen

2102 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, 510-549-9950. Amy Murray's leading downtown venue celebrates the Bay Area's bounty of fresh, organic foodstuffs with flair and a sense of fun. Egg and marrow flatbread, savory pork rillettes with lemon chutney, handmade pasta with pea tendrils and trumpet mushrooms, and a mixed pig plate of sausage, tenderloin, shoulder, and belly are among the menu standouts. $$$

Sidebar

542 Grand Ave., Oakland, 510-452-9500. In the 1990s, Barbara Mulas and Mark Drazek defined the sophisticated neighborhood eatery at Berkeley's ZAX Tavern. Many of the moneyed faves have turned up at Sidebar, the duo's mod California brasserie at the edge of Grand Lake. With its chill vibe, bar menu designed by Johnny Raglin of SF's Absinthe, and prices calibrated to the new Depression, Sidebar succeeds at defining the neighborhood restaurant for the post-Millennium. The kitchen has a talent for deeply satisfying comfort foods. $$-$$$

Up & Under

1 West Richmond Ave., Point Richmond, 510-778-1323. North America's first rugby pub serves up substantial and often tasty grub in a wonderfully roomy setting. Filet mignon sliders, the five-sausage platter, the pulled-pork sandwich, and cheesy scalloped potatoes are among the standouts; other dishes are on the heavily breaded side. Try the Muddy Cleat (chocolate cake with chocolate sauce and ice cream) for dessert. $$$

Vitus

2111 Broadway, Oakland, 510-452-[illegible]. Vitus has the design sense of a baroque mansion and the cubic footage of an airplane hangar with the seedy undertones of an old Vegas strip club. With live music most nights of the week, it seems an unlikely spot for dinner. Everything is budget-priced; lucky is the late-night music lover who stumbles onto fennel-rubbed Niman pork ribs or Rocky chicken sliders for five bucks. $

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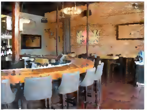

The District brings new cachet for Oakland

Ellen Cushing

LAST CALL

LIFE IN THE DISTRICT

New blood in Old Oakland

As artifacts of the ever-roiling bar buzz machine go, it's hard to resist the lurid charms of Thrillist, the pun-spewing, pop-culture-referential food-and-entertainment newsletter targeted squarely at San Francisco's disposable-income set. Especially when it comes to its assessment of The District, Old Oakland's newest wine-and-whiskey bar: "If you're going to convince yourself to spend any amount of time in Oakland, a) wait, you're seriously going to spend time in Oakland?! and b) fine, at least promise you'll do it at District Oakland, a new barn-sized brick-rich bar opening tomorrow in Oldtown *[note: ?!]* and serving you high-end whiskey and wine ..."

Because, yes, The District — which already has an outpost in SoMa — is certainly the San Franciscoest bar in the East Bay, for better or for worse. The furniture comes in expensive-looking fabrics and neutral colors, the music doesn't stray far from the midtempo, vaguely world-inflected soundtrack of upscale bars everywhere, the clientele falls squarely along the lines of the post-work and polo-shirted. The space is, indeed, barnlike and brick-rich, with a big U-shaped bar, hardwood floors, high tables, macramé couches, cushy booths, and gorgeous light fixtures — gentle and comfortable, if a teensy bit focus-grouped. The walls are adorned with graphic art, and on the north side, a big TV that appears usually to be playing sports; on the east end, they're replaced almost entirely with big picture windows looking out onto the genteel edgelessness of Old Oakland. There's Fernet in the cocktails and acronym-soaked shop talk in the air and the slightly itchy feeling of newness everywhere: new wood on the floor, new life in a previously inert location, and — it can't be ignored — new cachet for Oakland, at least of the kind that attracts San Francisco money and blog buzz. After about four weeks, The District already appears to be wildly popular, judging by the way it can get packed even at off-peak hours.

The District is plainly a bar for wine and/or whiskey snobs — or at the very least people who would like to be — and its double-sided fine-printed wine menu and padded booklike whiskey bible reflect that. Wine is on the expensive side ($6 to $16 a glass) but appreciably high-quality, with tasting notes — a flurry of "nose"s and "palate"s and "tannins" — included, as well as a brief list of education-oriented three-wine flights ($15-$22). Whiskeys are well-chosen, spanning a spectrum from the relatively cheap and widely known (Bulleit, $10 for two ounces) to the rare and understandably expensive (Pappy Van Winkle fifteen-year, $32). And cocktails do the craft thing generally well and sometimes superlatively: the District Buck, for example, is a just-okay combination of bourbon, Fernet, and ginger beer, but the Breakfast of Champions (house-made bacon-infused bourbon, maple syrup, and egg white, $10), on the other hand, takes what could easily be a novelty thing and turns it into something surprising (even if it could use a little more bacon and a lot less maple): sweet and rich, with a sticky maple-sugar rim that I would seriously have licked off the glass if it were socially acceptable in a place like this (or, let's be honest, anywhere.)

The food, too, is impressive. At this point I've tried the chèvre-stuffed Peppadew peppers (tangy and surprisingly sweet), the ahi tuna tartare (bright-tasting and well-garnished with chili, cucumber, and bacon), the Moroccan spiced lamb meatballs (unctuous, rich, spicy-sweet), and the charcuterie platter (so good I ultimately started eating it with my fingers, social acceptability be damned) — all above-and-beyond-the-call-of-bar-food-duty delicious. ●

Ellen.Cushing@EastBayExpress.com

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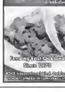

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12th Street Food Pod With various [illegible] local vendors on 12th Street, between Franklin Street and Broadway. Thursdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

[illegible] [illegible] Saturdays, [illegible] Actual Cafe, 6334 San Pablo Ave., [illegible] 510-653-8386, ActualCafe.com.

Bites Off Broadway [illegible] and delicious food from [illegible] of the Bay Area's [illegible], Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Continues through Oct. 12. [illegible] Studio One Art Center, 365 45th St., Oakland. [illegible]

[illegible] Food [illegible] With various [illegible] food vendors on [illegible] Street, between 14th and 15th streets. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Cooking at the Country Market [illegible] Sundays, [illegible] Continues through June 24. [illegible] 34800 [illegible] 510-544-2797 [illegible]

Ecology Center Farmers' Market [illegible] [illegible] Tue., May 29, 2-5 p.m., free. Berkeley Farmers' Market, [illegible] St., Berkeley. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org.

[illegible] Spring [illegible] and Market [illegible] Sale With sales on new white and red [illegible], sandwiches, and more. May 26-28, 12-5 p.m. $10. [illegible] Vallecitos Rd., Livermore. 925-447 [illegible]

Last Sunday [illegible] With [illegible] and more. Last Sunday of every [illegible], 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Caffe 817, 817 Washington St., Oakland. 510-271-7965, Caffe817.com.

Pop-up [illegible] [illegible] Berkeley, a rotating selection of [illegible] participating storefronts. Fridays, 12-8 p.m. Continues through May 25. [illegible] 1[illegible] 9th St., between [illegible]

North Park Food Pod With various [illegible] food vendors. Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. [illegible] Park, [illegible] St., Oakland.

[illegible] Food Pod With [illegible] Thursdays, 5-9 p.m. [illegible] Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave., Oakland. 510-238-7275. [illegible]

[illegible] Food Tuesdays With food [illegible] served in a restaurant setting. Tuesdays, $3-$6, 800-551-7966. Paragon Restaurant, 43 [illegible] Berkeley. 510-549-8510, ParagonRestaurant.com.

[illegible] Food Pod With [illegible] food vendors. Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Studio One Art Center, 365 45th St., between [illegible] 510-597-5027. StudioOneArts Center.net.

"Tagine" Moroccan Popup Night With Moroccan food specialty by chef [illegible] Every other Thursday, 6-10 p.m. Guerilla Cafe, 1620 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-2233. GuerillaCafe.com.

[illegible] Winery Spring [illegible] With the release of six new wines, [illegible] with [illegible] and cheeses. May 26-28, 12-5 p.m. Thomas Coyne Winery, 51 E. Vallecitos Rd., Livermore. 925-373-6541, ThomasCoyneWinery.com.

[illegible] Berkeley's Market [illegible] Crop Swap Trade your fruit or vegetable [illegible] at Delaware and Sacramento streets, across from the North Berkeley BART Station, free. May 28, [illegible] p.m. Free. TransitionBerkeley.com.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Alameda Farmers' Market With locally grown fruits and vegetables, plus family activities. Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. [illegible] Alameda Farmers' Market, Haight Ave. at Webster St., Alameda.

[illegible] Fresh [illegible] Community Produce Stand Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. [illegible] 3:30-6:30 p.m., free. 510-548-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement, 1718 Eighth St., Berkeley. 510-525-5400, [illegible]

[illegible] Farmers' Market Fresh produce supplied by local organic and specialty farmers. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Bayfair Center, 15555 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-357-6000, ShopBayfair.com.

[illegible] Fresh [illegible] Community Produce Stand Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. [illegible] 3:30-6:30 p.m. Free. 510-548-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Berkeley Youth Alternatives, 1255 Allston Way, Berkeley. 510-845-9010, [illegible]

[illegible] Farm [illegible] Market [illegible] Produce [illegible] Farm Fresh Choice runs produce stands in limited-resource neighborhoods. Wednesdays, 3:45-5:30 p.m. Free. 510-548-1704. EcologyCenter.org. Frances Albrier Community Center, San Pablo Park, 2800 Park St., Berkeley. [illegible]

[illegible] Farmers' Market With locally grown and produced fruit, vegetables, baked products, and more. Accepts WIC and EBT. Sundays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 510-535-6929. Fruitvale Village, 3401 E. 12th St. at Fruitvale BART, between [illegible] 510-534-6900. UnityCouncil.org.

Grand Lake Farmers' Market The weekly market hosts more than 70 produce [illegible] food, and arts and crafts vendors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. 800-897-3276. [illegible] Splash Pad Park, Grand Ave. and Lake Park Ave. [illegible] 510-238-7275. [illegible]

Hayward City Hall Farmers' Market A farmers' market featuring locally grown and produced foods from more than 35 farmers and specialty food purveyors. Saturdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 800-897-3276. [illegible] Hayward City Hall Plaza, 777 B St., Hayward. 510-583-4080. [illegible]

Kensington Farmers' Market With a [illegible] fresh [illegible] organic [illegible] products, fresh pork, fish, fresh produce, vegetables, nuts, [illegible] bread, [illegible] fresh bread, and between [illegible] The market also hosts live music and entertainment. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., free. 510-847-0801. KensingtonFarmersMarket.org. Colusa Circle, at the Colusa Circle, Kensington.

Laurel District Farmers' Market With certified organic produce from 15 [illegible] farms and a youth-led prepared food [illegible] the Purple Leaf Cafe. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. 510-482-1960. [illegible] Laurel [illegible] Farmers' Market, [illegible] MacArthur Blvd., Oakland.

Montclair Village Farmers' Market Featuring organic produce and specialty breads. Free parking in Village garage at the top of La Salle Avenue. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. [illegible] Downtown Montclair Village, LaSalle and Moraga Aves. [illegible]

North Berkeley Farmers' Market With [illegible] specialty foods, all-organic produce, and more for sale, along with special programs and events. WIC and EBT accepted. Thursdays, 3-7 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Shattuck Ave. at Rose St., Berkeley.

North Oakland Arlington Medical Center Farmers' Market With produce and other products sold by more than [illegible] vendors. Also facilitates produce swaps. Accepts WIC and EBT. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. [illegible] North Oakland Farmers' Market, Arlington Medical Center Parking Lot, Oakland.

North Oakland Children's Hospital [illegible] Farmers' Market Tuesdays, 2-7 p.m., free. 510-[illegible] [illegible] Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland, 747 52nd St., Oakland.

Old Oakland Farmers' Market Includes seasonal produce, breads, fish, and other organic foods, along with plenty of produce. Fridays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Old Oakland Farmers' Market, 9th St. [illegible] Broadway and Clay St., Oakland. [illegible]

Pacific Coast [illegible] Market Square Farmers' Market With seasonal produce, greens, nuts, freshly baked bread, pastries, [illegible] specialty foods, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., free. [illegible] and [illegible] Square, 98 Broadway, [illegible]

Richmond Farmers' Market With fresh, locally grown fruit, live chickens, flowers, eggs, and other produce. WIC and SNAP accepted. Fridays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., free. RichmondFarmersMarket.org. Richmond Farmers' Market, 24th St. and Barrett Ave., Richmond.

Saturday Berkeley Farmers' Market With fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty items, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. MLK Civic Center Park, 2151 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley. 510-981-5530. [illegible] 12700

Temescal Farmers' Market California vendors [illegible] offer seasonal produce, dried fruits and nuts, fresh ranch eggs, baked goods, locally caught fish, fresh-cut flowers, and more. Sundays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., free. 510-745-7100. DMV Parking Lot, 5300 Claremont Ave., Oakland.

Tuesday Berkeley Farmers' Market Fresh and organic produce, breads, specialty foods, and more for sale, plus special programs and events. Tuesdays, 2-6 p.m., free. 510-548-3333. EcologyCenter.org. Derby St., (at Martin Luther King Jr. Way), Berkeley. ●

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PICK

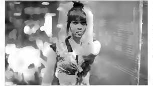
Crop Swap

Get super seasonal and hyper local: Bring your own homegrown garden produce to the Lorin Station Weekly Crop Swap (northeast corner of Alcatraz Ave. and Adeline St., Berkeley) on Sunday, May 27, and trade it for surplus backyard produce grown by others. Transition Berkeley and the Victory Garden Foundation organize these free hour-long weekly crop swaps throughout the late spring and summer; right now it's lemons, lettuce, kale, and beet season. 1 p.m., free. TransitionBerkeley.com
— Anneli Rufus

DESOLATION ANGELS

The wide world of prostitutes (*Whores' Glory*) and the Victorian vibrator club (*Hysteria*)

By Kelly Vance



It's not clear who exactly is being exploited in the documentary *Whores' Glory*.

Whores' Glory seems to be selling itself as a serious, unvarnished, ultra modern, world-class documentary about the world's oldest moral subject. But an exposé of prostitution is a dangerous field of inquiry in the first place. Too many old-fashioned exploitation pics called themselves exposés while delivering forbidden sex under the guise of censure. Even for seasoned doc-makers like Austrian Michael Glawogger, the temptation to sell an un-documentary-like amount of tickets by showing us what goes on in bordellos in Thailand, Bangladesh, and Mexico must be overwhelming.

Is it "exploitation" if we witness a blowjob in the course of the investigation? Does *Whores' Glory* — nice title, could be a rock band — cause us to leer any more than *The Hangover Part II* did? Are real working girls cute and homogenized à la Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, salty pathetic like Jodie Foster in *Taxi Driver*, or something else entirely? Did filmmaker Glawogger pay his subjects for their time like any other customer? And who's the audience for this doc, anyway? Righteous anti-trafficking crusaders, ho chasers, or the open-minded curious? Who's exploiting whom?

These are some of the questions this unrated extra-frank doc provokes. According to the filmmakers, it's the final film in Glawogger's "globalization trilogy," alongside *Workingman's Death* (a grim survey of the "world's worst jobs") and *Megacities*, a similarly pessimistic travelogue. Glawogger, in common with many other documentarians, is obviously appalled by the cruelties of the global economy. Commoditized sex is a part of that larger discussion, and he's determined to dwell on the ugly side of the topic as the women describe their lives for the camera. We pass through the eye of the needle and learn how the world works, for better or worse.

The film is divided into three separate segments by location, without narration. At the Hi Class massage parlor off Rachadapisek Road in Bangkok, the masseuses sit in ordered rows behind a picture window "fishbowl" style, with customers ordering by number for a two-hour session. It's a smooth operation reminiscent of a cocktail lounge in an upscale hotel, and during breaks the employees chitchat like office workers, complaining about the lack of customers and toting up their earning potential. There's no shame involved for the workers, all Buddhist, and even the customers (mostly Thai men with a few foreign tourists) are candid on camera, crediting the parlors with saving their marriages. On their girls' night out, a few of the workers make a beeline for a "host bar," where they spend their cash on handsome, well-mannered young Thai bar boys.

Bangkok seems like Beverly Hills compared to the City of Joy in Faridpur, Bangladesh, a foul warren of dingy, depressing cribs where heavily made-up females ranging in age from what seems like twelve to over forty cater to a clientele of working men, while goats wander the halls. The atmosphere is rough and hard-sell, and the inmates are bitterly humiliated. ("Men don't realize how we sacrifice our sense of shame for money," says one.) Muslim Bangladesh is poorer than Thailand, something that's reflected in the madams' hard-hearted bargaining for young girls from the provinces.

Whores' Glory
Directed by Michael Glawogger. Opens Friday

Hysteria
Directed by Tanya Wexler. With Hugh Dancy and Maggie Gyllenhaal. Opens Friday

No one becomes a whore for anything other than money. Unlike in Thailand, in Bangladesh prostitution is a life sentence — once you're in, you and your family are stigmatized forever.

If Bangkok is the fast lane and Faridpur is the sewer, then the Zona Tolerancia in Reynosa, Mexico, across the river from McAllen, Texas, is the classic Tex-Mex border Night Town, reeking of violence and soaked in Roman Catholic imagery, where pickup trucks full of gleefully drunk men drive by the painted Infierno doorways. In this hallucinatory atmosphere, the girls smoke crack, drink too much beer, philosophize with each other, and fervently pray to the Death Angel, but always with a distinct moral outlook. They realize they're doomed, but inside that condition there are rules of conduct. In interviews, Glawogger has explained that his choice of settings for *Whores' Glory* was dictated by the amount of access he could obtain. In Mexico seemingly anything goes.

Wolfgang Thaler's cinematography is lustrous, and the whorehouse jukebox playlist — heavy on PJ Harvey and CocoRosie, with plenty of traditional Mexican tunes for Reynosa — ostensibly reflects the women's emotions, even though their own words are eloquent enough. At the end of this sad tour, Glawogger and his subjects leave us with a combination of despair and a plaintive, fatalistic romanticism that could only be invoked by the collision of sex and money. *Whores' Glory*, but no one ever wins.

Tanya Wexler's *Hysteria* is a particularly agreeable costumed comic-drama, not just because of its front story — about a doctor in Victorian London who created a sensation and got rich by developing the first "electric personal massager," aka vibrator, to treat the titular "woman's disorder" — but also for its subplot, in which the doctor learns something about social justice and how the other half lives, from his liberated lady friend.

Young physician Mortimer Granville (Hugh Dancy), a conventional but generous-natured sort, moves up in the world when he joins the practice of Dr. Robert Dalrymple (Jonathan Pryce). Their wealthy female patients greatly enjoy having their private parts manipulated to relieve their "nagging thoughts," but the procedure takes an hour and fatigues the doctors' digits. Then up pops the new invention and satisfies everyone but Dalrymple's feminist, socialist daughter Charlotte (Maggie Gyllenhaal), who runs a settlement house charity with her own limited funds for the benefit of people who can't pay for their decidedly more urgent health needs.

One man's "paroxysm" leads to one woman's blessing, as Mortimer discovers there's more than one kind of hysteria, and laughs ensue that won't make anyone wince. Director Wexler, working from a screenplay by Stephen Dyer and Jonah Lisa Dyer adapted from an idea by Howard Gensler, portrays the film's class tension as another facet of the disconnect between Victorian manners and messy, unmentionable real life, with fine support by Rupert Everett as an electronics whiz and Felicity Jones as the doctor's rather vacant other daughter who never quite catches the buzz. If you could find a movie house that's showing both *Hysteria* and *Whores' Glory*, you'd have the makings of a memorable date-night double feature — with the right open-minded date, that is. ■

Kelly.Vance@EastBayExpress.com

MOVIES & THEATERS

To learn where a movie is playing, go to EastBayExpress.com or scan the QR code. Capsule reviews are written by J.R. Jones (J.J.), Ben Sachs (B.S.), and Kelly Vance (K.V.). For a schedule of repertory films, see One-Night Stands at the end of these listings. Please send info fourteen days before event date to Ell[illegible].Cushing@EastBayExpress.com

OPENING

Hysteria See this week's review. (95 min.)

Men in Black 3 Same silly sci-fi premise as before but with much, much better special effects. Those alone might justify seeing this [illegible] it's certainly not the plot. Agent J (Will Smith) time-travels back to 1969 to prevent evil alien Boris the Animal (Jemaine Clement) from destroying Earth and killing a younger version (Josh Brolin) of the 2012 [illegible] Agent K (Tommy Lee Jones). Brolin's Tommy Lee imitation is very good; he is almost [illegible]'s turn as Griffin, the agency's holy fool of a seer, also in the bright cast: Emma Thompson as MIB chief Agent O, Mike Colter as a sympathetic army colonel, and Nicole Scherzinger as Boris' [illegible] girlfriend. Directed in standard [illegible] style by veteran Barry Sonnenfeld from a screenplay by Etan Cohen, Jeff Nathanson, and [illegible], adapted from a [illegible] book by Lowell Cunningham. (106 min.) (K.V.)

Polisse The Child Protection Unit of the Paris, France police department, [illegible] of unhappy vignettes, with distressed [illegible] Emmanuelle Bercot, Frédéric Pierrot, Sandrine Kiberlain, and [illegible] high-powered cast [illegible] a nod in the [illegible] (129 min.) (K.V.)

Whores' Glory See this week's review. (118 min.)

ONGOING

Battleship [illegible] based on [illegible] Hasbro board game [illegible] and following a group of [illegible] alien [illegible], directed by Peter Berg, written by Erich and Jon Hoeber and starring Alexander Skarsgård, Brooklyn Decker, and Liam Neeson. (131 min.)

Bernie Actor Jack Black redeems himself and [illegible] Linklater has a home run with [illegible] comic character study [illegible] East Texas [illegible] Everyone in the little town of Carthage [illegible] Bernie Tiede (Black) [illegible] Marjorie Nugent (Shirley MacLaine) [illegible] Matthew McConaughey (as the gung-ho local DA) [illegible] Linklater (*The School of Rock*, *Before Sunrise*, *Me and Orson Welles*) and co-writer Skip Hollandsworth [illegible] *Fargo* [illegible] *Slacker* and *Dazed and Confused* [illegible] "Bernie, What Have You Done?" [illegible] (104 min.) (K.V.)

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel Ensemble comedy about a group of Britons who decide to spend their retirement in India. Directed by John Madden; adapted by Ol Parker from the novel *These Foolish Things* by Deborah Moggach; starring Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Maggie Smith, Dev Patel, and Tom Wilkinson. (124 min.)

The Cabin in the Woods Sort of a postmodern *Scooby-Doo* and sheer fun by *Buffy the Vampire*

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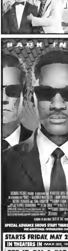
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SONY

Steyer collaborators Joss Amadeo and Drew Goddard sets Amadeo a familiar story of five college kids trying heaven by Amadeo at the 11th location and scenes of two snarky white-collar technicians (Richard Jenkins, Bradley Amadeo.) monitoring the slaughter from a NASA-type human center. Amadeo the first narrative is so crushingly generic (which turns out to be the point) amid all the amusement derives from trying to figure out what the heck is all about. I'm not sure I ever did, but the Amadeo one-two punch of special-effects whoa and meta-movie chic sending human have the fanboys trembling with delight. Goddard directed Whedon produced. (95 min.) (D.J.)

Chimpanzee Disney-produced nature-and-blood surprise — a chimpanzee Amadeo by Alastair Fothergill wheelark Linfield and narrated by Tim Allen.

Dark Shadows See pick.

The Dictator By now Sacha Baron Cohen's "kinda fur mgner" shtick (literal, absurd) should be utterly familiar to whomever. Like many blood or smile popcorn. So this about how Aladeen of an Arab despot named Admiral General Aladeen has led his Amadeo element before anyone even seen B... ton and ...scene Cohen scores a few sardonic Amadeo points in the last quarter. Bearded Middle East tyrant Amadeo gets lost on a state trip to New York City, falls in love with a health food-store manager (Anna Faris, brilliantly), and lays more boldly-Amadeo jokes than any ten other young-adult-male comedy heroes. That's why Cohen is king of the gag comedy close-up, who also why the whose intuits blood after the about verses off. Amadeo by Amadeo Alec Berg, about Mandel, and Jeff Schaffer who directed by Larry Charles, with Ben Kingsley and John C. Reilly. A weapon of mass Bulsian. (83 min.) (K.V.)

Elena Anne, a preoccupied, accident-prone imagined writer with spouse Amadeo (Juliette Binoche), gets early Amadeo with her featured sexy subjects: a pair of Amadeo prostitutes, Charlotte (Anais Demoustier), a frankie-faced girl-next-door type, and Polish immigrant Alicja (Joanna Kulig), a chilly mysterious-drinker with a cruel streak. And so absurd Malgorzata Szumowska, a Polish product herself, working with a screenplay she wrote with Tine Byrckel whips up a sour and tangy portrait of Amadeo European urban discontent, Amadeo by Binoche's Amadeo emic preoccupied, Hollandy mood, an intimate emotional current running through the two women with intimately points who expect the apprehensive Anne. But Szumowska's Elena isn't about journalism. It's about human Amadeo with a side helping of restlessness. The three incredible put on a show (including graphic sex scenes), but it's a small show. (96 min.) (K.V.)

First Position a Documentary following six young ballet dancers as they ready for the about American Grand Prix, a prestigious dance competition. Directed by Bess Kargman. (89 min.)

The Five-Year Engagement Judd Apatow-produced romantic comedy about a young couple in the about of, if you Amadeo it, a five-year engagement. Directed by Nicholas Stoller, written by Stoller and Jason Segel, starring Segel, Emily Blunt, and Alison Brie.

Showtimes Online

Movie showtimes and online ticket-buying at EastBayExpress.com.

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Gerhard Richter Painting Documentary about the life and work of the famed German painter. Written and directed by Corinna Belz. (97 min.)

Girl in Progress Comedy-drama about a single mom juggling her daughter, her job, and her lost love. Directed by Patricia Riggen, written by Hiram Martinez, and starring Eva Mendes as the titular girl. (93 min.)

God Bless America Bobcat Goldthwait, the strenuous comedian-turned filmmaker who gave us World's Greatest Dad, barber out a lesson with this saga of a middle-aged nobody (well played by Joel Murray) who goes on a road-trip shooting rampage with his unlikely Amadeo, a teenage girl (Tara Lynne Barr) who idolizes Alice Cooper. In Goldthwait's darker-than-thou piggy commentary on violence and dumbed-down entertainment in the USA, is does he identify with pissed-off Frank Murdoch, a la Falling Down? We may never know for sure. Writer-director Goldthwait's scathing lampoon of everyday life and Amadeo of human TV shows are fun for awhile, but as the Sasha pile up the angry white guy all spectacle more, and then fight. Rage is already cheap, and Goldthwait sells it at a discount. Also with Aris Amadeo (104 min.) (K.V.)

Headhunters Roger (Aksel Hennie) is a fast-talking Oslo corporate Amadeo who compensates for his lack of stature by operating a slick fine-art theft ring. His tall, aristocratic-looking, blond wife about (Synnove Macody Lund), about Roger is desperately trying to Amadeo may be having an affair with rugged, suave Clas (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), a new businessman in town, and who a direct rival for actor Aaron Eckhart. What happens to them in Morten Tyldum's Sasha Sasha to a then raises out of the European north of Norway, a about of narrative travels arranged by director Tyldum and screenwriters Lars Gudmestad and Ulf Ryberg. Amadeo from a novel by Jo Nesbø, the whole amounts a life of its own, what's a dirty life. (100 min.) (K.V.)

The Hunger Games Adapted from the popular young-adult novel, this sci-fi fantasy concerns the doom Amadeo gladiators fighting each other to the death as part of a televised spectacle in the distant Amadeo director Gary Ross (Pleasantville) generally Sasha the elaborate fashion shots and special effects that Amadeo high-concept blockbusters, and cinematographer Tom Stern, re-creating the Amadeo blue-gray tones of his many films with Clint Amadeo, honors the character Sasha and scenes of hand-to-hand combat mainly in close-up with a handheld camera. With director Lawrence, Woody Harrelson, and Wes Bentley. (142 min.) (K.S.)

Jiro Dreams of Sushi Feast off to Amadeo gastroneverland with this fine, appetizer about chef, whose ten-seat restaurant in a Tokyo subway station is a world-renowned Amadeo for customers seeking the elusive "perfect piece of about." According to Amadeo-maker about Gelb's worshipful profile of the 85-year-old master Jiro-san is a quiet perfectionist who's never quite Amadeo with his craft. And as we watch him preparing his tasty morsels by the knife tips and sending his disciples to the Amadeo fish market to buy the Amadeo cuts we're ready to bestow Sasha the top of a living about of purists. Pristine. (81 min.) (K.V.)

Mansome Amiably lightweight Morgan Spurlock documentary. The maker of Super Size Me and The Greatest Movie Ever Sold tackles modern male grooming, and it's more or less the same type of self-satisfied product-oriented advertorial we'd encounter in the pages of GQ magazine. Tour on facial hair, Amadeo, body hair, etc. The talking heads include producer Judd Apatow, director John Waters, comedian Adam Carolla, and actor Zach Galifianakis, but none of them has anything interesting to add to the discussion. Best segment: the old-school stylist who manhandles rugs in his Irish New York barber shop. Runner-up: the pro wrestler who has to laboriously shave every inch of his absurd body before each match in order to maintain the "look." You'll forget about this one while you're still watching it. (86 min.) (K.V.)

Marvel's The Avengers Exactly the sum of its parts. Without Robert Downey Jr. (Iron Man), Mark Ruffalo (The Incredible Hulk), and Scarlett Johansson (Black Sasha), this installment of Stan Lee's Marvel Comics superhero adventures would be just another expensively prefused demolition derby. But writer-director Joss Whedon's dialogue and situations (co-written with Zak Penn, adapted from Lee and Jack Kirby's comic book) come to life blessedly when Iron Man, the Hulk, and Black Sasha do their thing, which Amadeo-saving Earth from disgruntled about Loki (Tom Hiddleston) and a lot of runaway technology about the Tesseract. Don't ask, just marvel. The two-and-a-half hours fly by with a bang. Also with Jeremy Renner (Hawkeye), Samuel L. Jackson (Nick Fury), Chris Evans (Captain America), Chris Hemsworth (Thor), and the twinkly Gwyneth Paltrow as Tony "Iron Man" Stark's squeeze Pepper Potts. Now if they about only figure out a way to get Spider-Man into the mix. (142 min.) (K.V.)

Mirror Mirror Live-action adaptation of Snow

PICK

Dark Shadows

America's first and foremost soap-opera vampire, Barnabas Collins (Johnny Depp at his funniest), wakes up in 1972 and has to contend with something even stronger than the curse of the undead: women's lib. Before Tim Burton's gleeful horror comedy hits its gothic brick wall in the final reel, he and the cast have an ungodly amount of fun playing old-fashioned squire Barnabas against an array of uppity, unsatisfied females. Chief among them is Eva Green as witch Angelique, vengeful victim of Barnabas' unrequited love – but there's also the family matriarch (Michelle Pfeiffer), a randy shrink (Helena Bonham Carter), the virginal nanny (Bella Heathcote), and Chloë Grace Moretz as the vamp's unimpressed teenage descendant. Director Burton and his visual crew – DP Bruno Delbonnel, production designer Rick Heinrichs, et al. – outdo themselves in the grotty kitsch-and-rust dept., and Seth Grahame-Smith's screenplay (from a story he wrote with John August, adapted from the TV series by Dan Curtis) is ripe with witty situations. Burton's best since *Ed Wood*. Also with Jackie Earle Haley as Willie the caretaker, and Christopher Lee, perfect as a gnarled old sea captain. (113 min.) *Kelly Vance*

White, starring Lily Collins as the storybook princess and Julia Roberts as her evil-queen mother. Directed by Tarsem Singh; adapted from the famed Brothers Grimm fairytale by Melissa Wallack and Jason Keller; also starring Armie Hammer and Sean Bean.

Otter 501 A somewhat attractively produced animal documentary uses a character called Katie (Katie Pofahl) as a narrator. A Monterey transplant newly arrived from Wisconsin, Katie joins an otter rescue operation primarily to work with a rescued pup named Otter 501. But we learn what Katie knows about the otters. For instance, that sea otters, once thought extinct after being hunted for their pelts, came back. There are now some 2,700 of them on the California coast. The scenery around Monterey Bay is captured magnificently by cinematographer Mark Shelley. Written by Josh Rosen and directed by Bob Talbot. More ecological films should be like this. (84 min.) (K.V.)

The Pirates! Band of Misfits The inept "Pirate Captain" (voice of Hugh Grant) is unsuccessful at one outing, so he and his crew get thrown into a silly plot involving [illegible] Charles Darwin (David Tennant) and Queen Victoria (Imelda Staunton) in order to qualify for the Pirate of the Year award. A first class Aardman Animations romp with snappy dialogue, [illegible] voice characterizations, and Aardman's usual ultra-detailed design. They just see the world differently than other animation studios, that's the only way to explain it. Hilarious and wonderful. Other voices by Salma Hayek, Brendan Gleeson, Martin Freeman, Jeremy Piven, and Selan Ahmed. Directed by Peter Lord from a screenplay by Gideon Defoe, adapted from his book, *Pirates! in an Adventure with Scientists*. (87 min.) (K.V.)

The Raven Fails to fully catch the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe. But it's more than the majority of films his name has been attached to. A mad serial killer is terrorizing 1849 Baltimore by imitating the gruesome killings in Poe's work, and it's up to the dissipated author himself (John Cusack) to solve the mystery. Cusack isn't quite as melancholic and brooding as we would expect Poe, but he has the look, and Ben Livingston [illegible] Shakespeare's [illegible] on [illegible]. Directed by James McTeigue [illegible]. Also with Brendan Gleeson, Alice Eve, and Luke Evans. (111 min.) (K.V.)

Sound of My Voice An example of how much a movie can accomplish with a good script, a few decent actors, and almost nothing else. A pair of investigative video reporters (Christopher Denham and Nicole Vicius) infiltrate a furtive Los Angeles cult built around a charismatic young woman named Maggie (Brit Marling from *Another Earth*) who claims to be a time traveler from 2054 [illegible] who urges her [illegible] devotees to increasingly violent acts. The screenplay by actress Marling and director Zal Batmanglij relies heavily on Marling's spooky animation and the story has the same [illegible] similar 2011 drama *Martha Marcy May Marlene* but something is missing. Think of it as a kind of [illegible] on the Marling mythos. (85 min.) (K.V.)

Think Like a Man Romantic comedy about [illegible] Steve Harvey's [illegible] in a series of games and misunderstandings [illegible] four their girlfriends all begin using the same relationship [illegible] book. Directed by Tim Story; written by Keith Merryman and David A. Newman; adapted from the featured advice book, Steve Harvey's *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*; and starring Regina Hall, Gabrielle Union, Michael Ealy, and Jerry Ferrara. (122 min.)

The Three Stooges Farrelly Brothers-helmed [illegible] of the classic series. Written and directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly and starring Sean Hayes, Will Sasso, and Chris Diamantopoulos. (92 min.)

What to Expect When You're Expecting Valentine's Day-style ensemble [illegible] couples dealing with the before, during, and after of childbirth and parenthood. Directed by Kirk Jones; written by Shauna Cross, Heather Hach, and Heidi Murkoff; starring Cameron Diaz, Jennifer Lopez, Elizabeth Banks, Chace Crawford, and Brooklyn Decker. (110 min.)

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

THURSDAY, MAY 24

Monty Python and the Holy Grail (91 min., 1975). [illegible], Berkeley. 9:00)

Immigrant Stories Featuring several short films. Third Annual [illegible] Film Festival (La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley, 7:30)

FRIDAY, MAY 25

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2001: A Space Odyssey (141 min., 1968). [illegible] (Grand [illegible] of California, Oakland, 8:30)

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Yellow Submarine (90 min., 1968). (Rialto Cinemas Elmwood, Berkeley, noon)

SUNDAY, MAY 27

[illegible] (93 min., 1978). Berkeley Underground Film Society (1106 Gilman St., Berkeley)

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30

[illegible] (75 min., 2011). Preceded by potluck and social hour at 6:30 p.m., followed by discussion (Humanist Hall, Oakland, 7:30)

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FRI-SAT-SUN (Digital 2D) 3:45, 9:45
MON-WED-THUR (2 projector 3D) 7:00
MON-WED-THUR (Digital 3D) 3:45, 9:45

THE DICTATOR (R)
FRI-SAT-SUN 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:05, 10:10
MON-THUR 4:00, 6:00, 8:05, 10:10

DARK SHADOWS (PG13)
FRI-SAT-SUN 11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:20, 10:00
MON-WED-THUR 4:45, 7:30, 10:00

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING (PG)
FRI-SAT-SUN 11:45, 2:[illegible], 4:30, 7:15, 9:35
MON-WED 4:30, 7:15, 9:35; THUR 4:30, 7:15

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JIRO DREAMS OF SUSHI (PG)
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MUSIC

NOWHERE TO GO BUT "UP"

IamSu! is the auteur behind the hottest local rap song on KMEL. So why isn't he signed?

By Rachel Swan

It could have been mere happenstance that I heard IamSu!'s now ubiquitous rap song "Up" blaring from multiple car stereos during the half-hour drive to meet him in Pinole. More likely, it was testament to the song's mammoth popularity. Now playing in heavy rotation on the Bay Area's two dominant hip-hop stations, KMEL and WiLD 94.9, it's become sonic wallpaper in IamSu!'s hometown of Richmond, a staple at clubs in Oakland, and a regular presence at the intersection of Adeline Street and San Pablo Avenue in Emeryville, where one driver swayed jerkily with his arms pinned behind his seatbelt. It came on the radio once during the drive from Oakland to Pinole, and twice during a traffic jam on the way back. It's currently playing on radio stations nationwide.

That's a coup for a local artist who came up without major-label backing, especially at a time when Bay Area hip-hop seems largely on the decline. Now 22, IamSu! — whose real name is Sudan Williams — began rapping as a student at Pinole Valley High School, where he also played basketball. He learned to make beats at Youth Radio, an Oakland organization that has won several prestigious awards (including a Peabody for investigative reporting), but has also become an improbable incubator for aspiring hip-hop artists. IamSu! says he learned to make beats under the tutelage of another local auteur, Traxamillion (né Jason Valerio). He eventually pulled together a dozen or so friends to form their own crew, called The Heart Break Kids — or HBK, as it's better known. Within a few years the group would dominate Bay Area hip-hop.

In some ways, that's tantamount to being a big fish in a small, increasingly brackish pond. As we found out by watching the well-intentioned but ill-fated hyphy movement, the Bay Area has never really been an epicenter for rap music. It's not home to major labels, it doesn't have industry cachet, and its two dominant hip-hop stations — both owned by Clear Channel — don't burden themselves with being local arts boosters. That meant the members of HBK had to go it alone. As teens, they learned to make beats on FruityLoops software, write their own hooks, and market themselves without any promotional armature. Not for nothing was IamSu!'s first-ever rap crew called "The Go Getters."

Sitting outside a Pinole Foster's Freeze on a recent afternoon, they were seven strong (though there are apparently five additional members, plus a couple adjunct rap crews) but characterized their operation as lean and mean. The role of most members remains unclear — one described himself as HBK's "court jester," another said he does interpretive sign language. In IamSu!'s words, things started "organically" about three years ago, when a few core members — rappers IamSu!, P-Lo, and Skipper, singer Rossi, and producer Kool John — began meeting after school to write verses at a local Burger King. They got by using minimal technology. To illustrate, IamSu! pulled out his iPhone — a 3G model in a pink case — and opened the Notes app. A list of files appeared on the screen, with names of rap songs typed out in tidy Marker Felt font. It contained his entire oeuvre. He said the iPhone is still his primary piece of gear.

The son of an elementary school teacher with a bohemian sensibility — he says she's prone to use phrases like "positive vibes" — IamSu! generally subscribes to the credo that less is more, and he's successfully applied it to hip-hop. The trick, he said, is to keep your operational costs low and your office portable. During high school, IamSu! released a whole spate of mixtapes and emailed them to local DJs, including Adam Giacomini — better known as DJ Amen — a tall, thin, narrow-faced, disarmingly affable KMEL mix show host who became the young rapper's de facto mentor. Amen broke a couple of IamSu!'s early tracks on an after-hours segment called "Damn, It's Late," which runs from 2 to 4 a.m. on Saturday mornings. Then nineteen, IamSu! had produced a few decent AutoTune-laden R&B songs, a small collection of freestyles, and a lascivious, sing-songy rap called "I Know What to Do With It." The latter was his first concerted attempt to mollify a pop audience. It sampled a loop from Drake's "The Night Off," pinched a few lines from Kanye West's "Slow Jamz," and sounded good enough overall to land IamSu! on The Bay Area Freshmen 10, a talent showcase that Amen launched in 2010 to promote local talent. Although his lyrics were still a bit crude (Sample line: *I'm going down, Mary/Make your girl scream so loud, scary*), the song showed promise. Or as Amen put it charitably, "I thought he had room to grow."

IAMSU! GENERALLY SUBSCRIBES TO THE CREDO THAT LESS IS MORE, AND HE'S SUCCESSFULLY APPLIED IT TO HIP-HOP. THE TRICK, HE SAID, IS TO KEEP YOUR OPERATIONAL COSTS LOW AND YOUR OFFICE PORTABLE.

But Amen didn't cotton as easily to IamSu!'s actual first hit, which is understandable: "Up" is shorthand for "Beat the Pussy Up," which is rather alarming subject matter for a group of high school-age emcees. (At nineteen, IamSu! was

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Many regard IamSu! as a new savior for Bay Area hip-hop.

considered the elder statesman.) "I don't think that [song] was appealing to anybody except teenage boys when it came out," Amen said, adding that he also wasn't enamored of the song's threadbare structure. It relies on two simple-chord voicings repeated over and over, though all you really hear are the two top notes. Not what you'd call an intricate piece of orchestration.

IamSu! and his co-writer, another young emcee named LoveRance, saw the song's potential. They put it on a flash drive, carried it around in their pockets, and foisted it on every club DJ who crossed their path. If the club had working microphones, LoveRance would grab one and start rapping over the track. Pretty soon the song had enough buzz to get them onstage at chichi venues like 330 Ritch, where they caught the attention of KMEL music director Big Von. He started playing "Up" on his afternoon program, which has a much wider audience than any late-night mix show. "Von is really the powerhouse who breaks records and puts them on the marketplace," Amen said. "I just help bring stuff to the table."

Within a couple months, "Up" was airing multiple times a day on KMEL — often enough, in fact, that IamSu! learned to switch the radio station in his mother's car at exactly 8:25 a.m. every morning, so she wouldn't hear her son rapping about female ejaculation. (Eventually, it was unavoidable, he said — "my mom was crazy upset.") LoveRance, who was a decidedly less-talented rapper but who was credited as a songwriter of "Up" on an early mixtape, got his own place on Bay Area Freshman Top 10 in 2011 — the same year that Kreayshawn was added as an honorable mention. Later that year, he inked a deal with Interscope.

Ironically, though, IamSu! is the group's more obvious frontman. He has the first verse on "Up," he's the more nimble rapper, has got a raspier, huskier vocal timbre, he wrote the beat. Moreover, he's unassailably handsome — more than six feet tall with saucer eyes and near-perfect facial geometry — he just looks like someone who should have a record deal. But so far, he's fallen behind his more market-savvy peers. IamSu! said that's a conscious choice. "It was just a decision I made because I didn't want to come out on that note," he asserted, insinuating that the image LoveRance cultivated for himself is a little too prurient, a little too adolescent, and probably a little too insipid to have real staying power.

Not that IamSu!'s solo material is a huge departure. He lards them with boasts and bawdy punchlines, and his latest claim to fame, a cameo on E-40's song "Function," is all about a booty call. That said, he's also shown more sophistication on songs that probably won't make it to radio. His new mixtape *KILT* sounds colder and sharper, with a lot of minor-key hooks and raps delivered in double time. Some of them are dismal. On "Over," IamSu! scolds listeners for their political apathy: *People need medicine, and people is hungry/But we don't do shit about it, and that's how it's gon' be*, he laments.

To date, IamSu! has released ten mixtapes — five in the last three years — guest starred on three radio hits, and penned hooks for reams of his more famous peers. Although he has yet to release an album, and is one year away from finishing an ethnic studies or communications degree at Cal State East Bay, there's a huge promotional machine behind the emcee, and many regard him as a new savior for Bay Area hip-hop.

That's a tall order, but one that IamSu! might be capable of filling without the support of a record label. After all, he's already discovered the holy grail of hip-hop: Make a song with zero production values, saturate it with male ego, and parlay it for local notoriety. Or in this case: Put a cache of verses on an iPhone, and use them to commandeer the airwaves. ●

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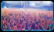

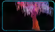

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INSIDE THE FRIENDZONE

How two beat-makers from the 'burbs spun their parents' generosity into social capital

By Rachel Swan

Last year, two art-school students from tony East Bay suburbs upset much of the conventional wisdom about hip-hop. Operating out of a gated community in Pleasanton just up the road from the Castlewood Country Club, producers Dylan Reznick and James Laurence seem to live at a great remove from the rappers with whom they collaborate — and from the timeworn cliche that hip-hop is about authenticity. Their production team, Friendzone, is both a supplier for rappers and a group unto itself. With a business model based on calculated generosity, Reznick and Laurence managed to parlay financial wherewithal into social capital. They formed mutually advantageous relationships with rappers who might otherwise have nothing to do with them. Improbably, they became two of the most sought-after auteurs in East Bay hip-hop.

Granted, that's largely a result of having a financial reservoir. Friendzone's studio is an in-law unit behind a giant house that belongs to Reznick's mom. She's an oil painter; his dad is a computer engineer who lives in Berkeley. The studio is slovenly — dishes lie on amplifiers, their surfaces clotted with food — but it has all the necessary hardware for top-of-the-line production. At its center is a horseshoe-shaped rig of adjoining desks, decked out with computers, keyboards, oscillators, prescription pill bottles, and the recently released iPad 3. There's also a bathroom, a kitchenette, and a couch littered with video game consoles. A giant painting on the back wall looks like a valiant attempt at abstract expressionism — Reznick said he and a few friends got naked one night, poured paint on their bodies, and rolled around on a large piece of scrap wood.

On a typical Sunday night, Reznick and Laurence are there cobbling beats, a task that evidently doesn't require much focus. Laurence plucks a cigarette from a pack left discarded on the couch, lights it, and stares blankly at a horror movie playing on the TV. On the screen a man wends through the corridors of a house with the same gothic proportions as Reznick's, clutching a shotgun. Reznick, who is rail-thin with a fauxhawk and a Pentagram tattoo, shows off the group's rig. With a few clicks of a mouse he opens their latest product — a new beat that they hope to foist on Oakland hip-hop duo Main Attrakionz. Deliciously pleasurable pop chords jangle through the computer speakers, punctured at intervals by old-fashioned 808 drum fills. The track sounds like a minimalist version of a Nineties slow jam. It's a style that Reznick and Laurence turned into a signature.

The two producers met seven years ago at one of Reznick's house parties. Laurence was a high school student with left-field musical tastes — he composed harsh experimental noise music on a laptop — and Reznick, then eighteen, was flitting through various offbeat subcultures. For a while, their career paths ran parallel. Reznick played guitar in a spate of punk bands, including the abrasive power trio Robin Williams on Fire, for which he usually played naked. They co-founded the indie band Destroy Tokyo with keyboardist Chris Danko and drummer Preetom Choudhury in 2007, but defected three years later. (The name "Friendzone" derives from one of Destroy Tokyo's song titles; Danko later rechristened the band "Religious Girls.") Last year Reznick and Laurence began writing instrumentals together in a style that's come to be known as "cloud rap." The name illustrates the aesthetic, Reznick said. "It means spacey, shoegaze, lo-fi, mostly full of reverb."

"Uh, beautiful," Laurence interjected.

To an observer, "cloud" might also befit Friendzone's creative process. Reznick and Laurence do a lot of their work remotely, with Laurence pilfering samples from a variety of sources and emailing them to Reznick for synth parts — the system is by definition lean, high-tech, and collaborative, not unlike the data-sharing model of cloud computing. The producers also distribute their music within an Internet cloud, posting most of the instrumentals on Tumblr or other social networks. To date, they've given beats away to several hip-hop acts, including Main Attrakionz and Japanese rappers Carlos and DKXO. They haven't made a penny.

Luckily, Friendzone has absolutely zero overhead costs, which puts them in a position to be de facto patrons of Oakland hip-hop. Laurence, who wears big glasses and baggy T-shirts, is a student at the Academy of Art University; Reznick studied sound engineering at Ex'pression College for Digital Arts, but says he actually learned most of his skills on the fly — in addition to a vast arsenal of computer equipment, his studio has a drum set and a few keyboards, on which he practices occasionally. The two of them say they were drawn to hip-hop partly out of curiosity, and that they got in the game by giving away tracks for free. That's how Laurence and Reznick found favor with their most high-profile client, Main Attrakionz, who they initially courted on Twitter.

It's a sensible business model for two fledgling producers, Reznick explained, indicating that once the group builds up enough cachet, it will try shilling tracks to major labels. Not to mention they have other ideas in the works, like the T-shirt line they developed a few months ago. If that doesn't work, they could always go back to punk.

◆

Rachel.Swan@EastBayExpress.com

James Laurence (l) Dylan Reznick write naturalistic known as "cloud rap"

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CD REVIEWS

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

A fleet-fingered jazz missive music for patient people and a fine, frayed country singer

Calvin Keys

An Evening with Calvin Keys

Hot on the heels of the January reissue of Calvin Keys' 1971 debut, *Shawn Neeq*, by San Francisco's Tompkins Square label comes the reemergence of the Omaha-born, Oakland-based guitarist's ninth of twelve albums. *An Evening with Calvin Keys* was recorded in 1994 at Maybeck Recital Hall in Berkeley as part of the chocolate company-sponsored "See's Sunday Night" series on KJAZ, and initially issued in 2003 by LifeForceJazz. The San Jose label has just made the double-disc CD available again with new packaging.

Although funk informed some of his other albums, *An Evening* is a straight-ahead trio affair on which Keys applies his fleet fingers and advanced melodic and harmonic sensibility to a dozen standards with support from bassist Tim Hauff and drummer Gaylord Birch. (Birch, perhaps the most versatile drummer ever to come out of Oakland, died two months after the recording.) Improvising without the safety net of another chordal instrument, Keys often uses neatly placed open space between his surprise-filled lines — a reflection, no doubt, of his seven years with Ahmad Jamal — as he gently swings Randy Weston's "Hi Fly," caresses Benny Golson's "I Remember Clifford," and digs into his blues roots for Kenny Burrell's "Chitlins Con Carne."

Keys can also be found in fine form on the recently recorded *Organic* by San Jose organist Brian Ho. (LifeForcejazz)

— *Lee Hildebrand*

At the 57th Street Gallery (5701 Telegraph Ave., Oakland) every Monday, 7 p.m., $5, $10. 57thStreetGallery.com

Sigur Rós

Valtari

A glaring confession: I've never listened to Sigur Rós before. Well, that's not really true. I've heard the band's music in movies like *The Life Aquatic*, and I've seen *Heima*, the stunning Icelandic tour documentary from 2007. There's also lead man Jónsi Birgisson's 2010 solo album, with which I'm familiar. I even sat in on an hour-long interview with him but, sadly, I still can't claim to have sat down with a particular album before this one.

Sigur Rós is music for patient people, something that I might have called myself maybe three or four years ago, and I suspect I'm not alone in feeling a wavering attention span as of late. A lot has happened since the band went on hiatus, and Sigur Rós' type of floaty ambient alien pop has been largely swept into dusty corners of collections dominated by boom baps and bleeps. Lamblike bleating, on the other hand, you don't see too much of anymore. So does the Icelandic trio's return to form hold up?

Of course it does. Since I'm unqualified to assess the album's finer points with scrupulous hubris, I'll focus on one moment which seems just as worthy as the rest. About twenty minutes into *Valtari*, on the track "Varúð," Sigur Rós gets really loud. There's so much sludge and pounding percussion that it's reasonably startling — it's no surprise that Birgisson is a professed fan of metal like Ozzy Osbourne and Iron Maiden.

Yet in comparison to previous works (as I've heard), the slowly rolling, boundary-free beauty of *Valtari* seems purposeful and carefully crafted. But don't expect too many surprises — that is, unless you're so out of it that you never listened to this band before. (XL)

— *Will Butler*

Willie Nelson

Heroes

Willie Nelson, like the late Johnny Cash, is one rare bird indeed, in that some listeners that usually abhor country music tend to dig him. (Miles Davis named a composition for him, and infamous jazz snob Wynton Marsalis has twice collaborated with Nelson.) After many years, he has returned to the Sony/Columbia roster via the label's Legacy imprint. The result is primarily typical Nelson, drawing upon standards, contemporary songs, and a few originals performed with a laid-back yet practiced band and a few guest stars (Merle Haggard and Billy Joe Shaver). There are peaks and valleys both: There's the spunky, swaggering Western swing of "Home in San Antone"; there's a Tom Waits tune, "Come on Up to the House," given an earnest gospel-charged reading; and there's the classic honky-tonk balladry of "This Cold War With You," sung with Nelson's old boss, country crooner Ray Price. Moreover, he makes Pearl Jam's "Just Breathe" and Coldplay's "The Scientist" feel as if they were written for him.

Nelson's cordial, sagebrush-on-the-trail-dust voice is fine as it's ever been, though a little frayed by age. But there are, indeed, valleys, such as the overabundance of non-essential guests (Sheryl Crow remains Bonnie Raitt Lite, Snoop Dogg can't really sing, Nelson's son Lukas' voice so resembles his padre's that it sounds like dueling Nelsons) and some painfully incontrovertibly banal songs (one imploring Jesus to bring John Wayne back with him — *Jesus and the Duke, right on?*). But second-tier Willie still beats most of what's in the marketplace. While not exactly essential, it's pretty damn decent nonetheless. (Legacy)

— *Mark Keresman*

LOCAL LICKS

BY

Rachel Efron

Put Out the Stars

Balladeer and torch singer Rachel Efron will probably never outgrow her girlish warble, much less her penchant for slightly anachronistic music — in the sense that a female vocal draped over a piano sounds a bit old fashioned. That said, her new release shows sophistication in songcraft and production values. The melodies are elegant and sometimes combative, even if the lyrics seem prudish. (self-released)

At Freight & Salvage (2020 Addison St., Berkeley) on June 14, 8 p.m., $20.50-$22.50

The Hollyhocks

Understones

It takes about three songs for indie band The Hollyhocks to devolve into conventional prettiness. For the most part, the four band members favor stark harmonies, unusually dissonant guitar lines, and riffs that sing rather than merely sustain a groove. The lyrics are compelling, too, even when they're about familiar things like love ("Lightning and Timing"), loneliness ("Photograph"), and complacency ("Static"). (self-released)

At the Make-Out Room (3225 22nd St., San Francisco) on June 8, 9 p.m., $6

Naytronix

Naytronix EP

It's become en vogue for jazz musicians to focus on pop, but bassist Nate Brenner was an early adopter of the trend — first in Michael Coleman's Beep!, then in Merrill Garbus' tUnE-yArDs, and his electronic solo act Naytronix, which bears traces of Brenner's Oberlin Conservatory training. It seeps through in the bold horn parts on "Good Thing" and in his slack cover of a Janet Jackson standard. (Plug Research)

Permanent Collection

Newly Wed Nearly Dead

Repetitive hooks, tinny production, and low-droning vocals give this album a narcotic quality, which is surely intentional. Singer Jason Hendardy emerged from the shoegaze outfit Young Prisms, and he still subscribes to that dreamily dense aesthetic; even with its upbeat tempos and sprightly guitar riffs, *Newly Wed* always tends toward ponderousness. Fortunately, several songs are imminently listenable. (Loglady Records)

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CONCERTS & CLUBS

THURSDAY 24

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Subterranean [illegible]. 8 p.m. $12-$15

Strawberry Music Festival: Cadillac with Robert Earl Keen, [illegible] Foster, [illegible] Pilsley & Friends, Alison Krauss and Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, Lil [illegible], I See Hawks in LA, Joan Osborne, Sarah and the Tall Boys, Johnny Nicholas & Hell Bent, Snap Jackson & the Knock On Wood Players, [illegible] Quintet, [illegible] Bell, Trampled by Turtles, and more. Camp [illegible]. $100-$200, 4-day pass.

Tony [illegible] & [illegible] with Johnny Nicholas & Hell Bent and Cindy Cashdollar, Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 p.m., $26.50, $22.50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] with [illegible]. Ashkenaz, 7:30 p.m., $8-$10

[illegible] dinner jazz with guest [illegible] singers, The Alley. 8 p.m., free

[illegible] Henderson and [illegible] Quinn's Lighthouse. 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

1 [illegible] 7 [illegible] with [illegible], Wonderland Syndrome, [illegible], and [illegible], [illegible] Club. 9 p.m., $6

[illegible] with The [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible], The New Parish. 7 p.m., $11-$13

The [illegible] with [illegible], and [illegible], The Barrel. 9 p.m., $12

[illegible] piano covers of [illegible] oldies, jazz & pop, Pete's Restaurant. 9 p.m., free

[illegible] plays **Happy Hour [illegible]**, [illegible]. 5 p.m., free

[illegible] Yoshi's Oakland. 8 & 10 p.m., $20

The [illegible] with Midnight [illegible] and [illegible], Vaux. 9:30 p.m., $5

The [illegible] [illegible] Irish Sports Bar. 10 p.m., free

[illegible] Fox Theater. 8 p.m., $40-$50

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Night featuring Midnight Sun Massive and [illegible] and the [illegible], Starry Plough. 9 p.m., $8-$10

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Brick & Mortar Music Hall. 9 p.m., $12-$15

[illegible] [illegible] & Blues. 8 & 10 p.m., $15

[illegible] with The Lonesome [illegible], Cafe du Nord. 8 p.m., $15

[illegible] The Warfield. 8 p.m., $38-$50

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] Trio live jazz and Midnight. 7:30-11 p.m., free

Eddie [illegible] and guests, Pete's San Francisco. 6-9 p.m., free

George [illegible] Scott [illegible]. 9:30 p.m.

The [illegible] La Colonial. 7-12 p.m., free

[illegible] San Francisco-based singer performs live jazz and blues, Top of the Mark. 7:30-11:30 p.m., $10

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Hotel Utah, 8 p.m., $10-$12

[illegible] with [illegible], Bottom of the Hill. 9 p.m., $10

[illegible] with City [illegible] and Billy [illegible] and Shake The Land, Thee Parkside. 5 p.m., $8

[illegible] plus [illegible], Kilowatt. 9 p.m., $13

The [illegible] Broadcast and Factory Minds and DJ Vanilla Gorilla, The Broadcast. 9 p.m., $7

[illegible] and [illegible], [illegible] and Ugly [illegible], Sub/Mission Gallery. 8 p.m., $8

[illegible] with The [illegible], [illegible] and DJ [illegible], 8 p.m., $12, $16

[illegible] and Midnight [illegible], [illegible] Keeps Their [illegible]. 9:30 p.m., $10-$12

We Are Serenades The Independent. 9 p.m., $18

Soul, Book R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] with Marcus Cohen & The Congress, Great American Music Hall. 9 p.m., $15, $18

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Mojito. 5:30 p.m., free

FRIDAY 25

EAST BAY

All Ages

The [illegible] Symphonic [illegible] Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center. 7:30 p.m., $5

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Winery [illegible] and Alison Krauss & Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, [illegible] Winery. 7:30 p.m., $59-$125

Strawberry Music Festival: Spring with [illegible] Earl Keen, [illegible] Foster, [illegible] Pilsley & Friends, Alison Krauss and Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, 18 South, I See Hawks in LA, Joan Osborne, Sarah and the Tall Boys, Johnny Nicholas & Hell Bent, Snap Jackson & The Knock On Wood Players, [illegible] Quintet, [illegible] Bell, Trampled by Turtles, and more. Camp [illegible]. $100-$200, 4-day pass

Tom [illegible] Hippie Gypsy Cafe. 6:30 p.m., free

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] 57th Street Gallery. 8:30 p.m., $15, $12

[illegible] jazz supergroup featuring Joshua Redman, Aaron Parks, Matt Penman, and Eric Harland, Yoshi's Oakland. 8 & 10 p.m., $28, $30

Jazz Mafia All Stars Vitus. 9 p.m., $8, $10

[illegible] with [illegible] and Matt Clark, Jazzschool. 8 p.m., $15, $12

[illegible] [illegible] jazz with guest [illegible], The Alley. 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

The [illegible] Age [illegible] with The [illegible] Beats, The Skank Agents, and [illegible], [illegible] 924 Gilman. 8 p.m., $7

[illegible] with The [illegible] That Kill, [illegible], and Terry [illegible], The New Parish. 8 p.m., $12

The [illegible] with [illegible] & [illegible] and Those Unknown, The Uptown. 9 p.m., $10

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] Kids, Starry Plough. 9:30 p.m., $7-$10

[illegible] with [illegible] Something and [illegible], Ashkenaz. 9 p.m., $12, $15

[illegible] piano covers of [illegible] oldies, jazz & pop, Pete's Restaurant. 9 p.m., free

The [illegible] with [illegible], Independent, The [illegible] and [illegible], Eli's Mile High Club. 9 p.m., $6

[illegible] Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 p.m., $24.50, $26.50

[illegible] with [illegible], and [illegible] 3 Club. 9 p.m., $6

[illegible] Hume Cafe. 6-10 p.m., free

Soul, Book R&B & Hip-Hop

[illegible] [illegible]. 9:30 p.m., free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

[illegible] Biscuits & Blues. 8 p.m.-midnight, free

[illegible] Biscuits & Blues. 8 & 10 p.m., $20

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

[illegible] The [illegible] Records. 5:30-8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible], Great American Music Hall. 9:30 p.m., $30

[illegible] [illegible]. 9 p.m., $25, $28

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible] and The [illegible], Thee Parkside. 9 p.m., $7

[illegible] with The [illegible] and [illegible], Bottom of the Hill. 10 p.m., $10

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Hemlock Tavern. 8:30 p.m., $10

[illegible] with [illegible] Key And The Barrel, [illegible] Hill [illegible] Center. 7:30 p.m., $30

The [illegible] with [illegible] (D.C.) and [illegible], Mezzanine. 9 p.m., $18.50

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Cafe du Nord. 9:30 p.m., $10

La [illegible] with [illegible], Brick & Mortar Music Hall. 9 p.m., $10, $15

SATURDAY 26

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Kelly McFarling with [illegible] & [illegible] and [illegible], Starry Plough. 9:30 p.m., $7-$10

[illegible] Family [illegible] Happy Hour, Starry Plough. 5 p.m., free

Strawberry Music [illegible] with [illegible] Earl Keen, [illegible] Foster, [illegible] Pilsley & Friends, Alison Krauss and Union Station featuring Jerry Douglas, [illegible], I See Hawks in LA, Joan Osborne, Sarah and the Tall Boys, Johnny Nicholas & Hell Bent, Snap Jackson & The Knock On Wood Players, [illegible] Quintet, [illegible] Bell, Trampled by Turtles, and more. Camp [illegible]. $100-$200, 4-day pass

Experimental & Avant Garde

The [illegible] [illegible]. 8 p.m., $15, $10

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

George [illegible] and Trio [illegible] Pub. 9:30 p.m., $3

[illegible] jazz supergroup featuring Joshua Redman, Aaron Parks, Matt Penman, and Eric Harland, Yoshi's Oakland. 8 & 10 p.m., $25, $30

Jazz & Joy Taste of Joy. 5:30 p.m., free

John [illegible] [illegible]. 8 p.m., free

[illegible] dinner jazz with [illegible], The Alley. 8 p.m., free

The [illegible] 57th Street Gallery. 8:30 p.m., $15, $12

Rock & Pop

[illegible] with [illegible], and Smart Changed, [illegible] Open House. 7 p.m., $10

[illegible] piano covers of classics, oldies, jazz & pop, Pete's Restaurant. 9 p.m., free

[illegible] with [illegible], [illegible], and Pathology, Oakland Metro Opera House. 7 p.m., $25, $27

[illegible] [illegible]. 9:30 p.m., free

La [illegible] with [illegible], Angry Starfish, [illegible] and [illegible] 924 Gilman. 8 p.m.

[illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible], Eli's Mile High Club. 7 p.m.

[illegible] & The [illegible] with [illegible], King Louie's [illegible], Monuments, The [illegible], and [illegible] Helpers, Vaux. 9 p.m., $12

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PICKS

James Farm

Although the name doesn't yet have wide currency in jazz circles, James Farm is a veritable supergroup. Its default leader, saxophonist Joshua Redman, is a Berkeley High alum, son of the late avant-garde composer Dewey Redman, and 1991 winner of the Thelonious Monk Institute Jazz Saxophone Competition, which is widely regarded as a forum for showing the best young musicians in the world. His James Farm bandmate Aaron Parks took third place in the 2006 piano iteration. The other members, bassist Matt Penman and drummer Eric Harland, served with Redman in the SFJAZZ Collective, and are known for their intuitive playing and introspective composition styles. And it shows on James Farm's recordings, which are harmonically dense and sometimes confrontational, but also full of funky drumming and light, jaunty grooves. The band members pride themselves on having a wandering palette, meaning the mix has influences from rock, blues, hip-hop, and R&B, even if jazz is their basic template. You can hear all those raw materials in their songs, and the result is pretty satisfying.

James Farm plays at Yoshi's (510 Embarcadero, Oakland) Friday through Sunday, May 25-27. Fri.-Sat. 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., Sun. 7 p.m., $23-$30. Yoshis.com — *Rachel Swan*

Bosie's Big Bash

It's been more than a decade since Big Bad Voodoo Daddy dominated charts and got everyone feeling all nostalgic for simpler times, but a Rosie the Riveter party seems just the right occasion to get back in the swing of things. The National Park Service is unveiling its new World War II Home Front NHP Visitor Center in Richmond, and to celebrate, it's throwing a night of cocktails, food, and dancing. Even if you've got two left feet, it might be worth it if you've never been to an event at Richmond's elegant Craneway Pavilion (1414 Harbour Way South, Richmond). Plus, it's a throwback event for a good cause. The visitor center, which opens Saturday, commemorates the 70th birthday of WWII's fun-size symbol of women's equality. Spring for the VIP option and get early access to the museum, plus free drinks to wet your whistle and get you dancing. Saturday, May 25, 7 p.m., $19-$25. Craneway.com — *Will Butler*

I Love This City Festival

Every year in March thousands congregate in Florida, testing sound systems across Miami for the ULTRA Music Festival, held as an adjunct to the massive Winter Music Conference. There are comparable celebrations of electronic house and dance music all around the country but none has succeeded at packing the appeal of ULTRA into a brief couple of days quite like Live Nation's I Love This City Festival. The touring event boasts a towering lineup this year featuring headliners such as Steve Aoki, Sebastian Ingrosso, Afrojack, Duck Sauce, Feed Me, and standby crowd pleasers such as Tiesto and David Guetta. There are also some juicy treats like a DJ set from the recently "retired" James Murphy of LCD Soundsystem. Lesser-known acts include hip-hop stylist Araabmuzik and a few others — Cut Chemist and The Crystal Method among them — along with up-and-comers Apparat, Holy Ghost!, and Holy Fuck. It all goes down at Shoreline Amphitheatre (1 Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View) on Friday and Saturday, May 25-26, 1:30 p.m., $99. ILoveThisCityFestival.com — *N.B.*

C&C

Young Liars with Drinking Water Gone Day to Day, Malibu [illegible] Stork Club. 8 p.m. $6

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Ol' Ball B Dorsey's Locker. 8 p.m., free

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

All Night Milonga milonga starts at 8:30 p.m., then party till dawn. The Tada, The [illegible] Performing Arts. 8:30 p.m., $15 includes class, $10 for just milonga
Antar Richard Garcia [illegible] Ashkenaz. 7 p.m. [illegible]
Pierre Abraham Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 8 p.m. $24.50-$28.50
Rumba La Bebida with [illegible] Peaks, lesson at 8 p.m., Ashkenaz. 9:30 p.m. $12-$15

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Earnest East Doggiefish Saloon, 9-11 p.m., free
Hoodsohn with [illegible] Heights, St.

Abraham [illegible] Crossing Daylight, Great American Music Hall. 7 p.m. $15
Mollinde ill Machen Italian folk music with Shari Mignano. Caffe Trieste. 10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. free
Holloway & The Harlem Ambassadors [illegible] & Blues. 8 & 10 p.m. $22

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Eddie Pasternak Duo with guests. Yoshi's San Francisco. [illegible] p.m. free
Kenny Barron & Mulgrew Miller Herbst Theatre. 8 p.m. $25-$60
Abraham Farren Bell [illegible] BMW [illegible] 8 p.m. $10

Rock & Pop

Aurora Tandras with [illegible] & Outlaw Hollow Mirrors, and Owl Three [illegible] 9 p.m. $7
Boy In the Bubble [illegible] show, Make-Out Room. 8:37 p.m. $8
Fat Opie Bazaar Cafe. 8 p.m. free
Polish Ticket with [illegible] Bottom of the Hill. 8 p.m. $10
Wall On Wheels with [illegible] Cafe Du Nord. [illegible] 3 p.m., free
Lake with [illegible] Cloud [illegible] 9:30 p.m. $7
Tell Boheit with [illegible] 8 p.m. $12
Wallace with Very Be Careful, DJ Aztec Panet, Bass & Herbst music hall. 9 p.m. $15

SUNDAY 27

EAST BAY

All Ages

Abraham Lincoln Brigade Celebration Salvage Civil War songs. Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse. 2 p.m., $22.50-$24.50

Blues, Folk & Country

Americana Unplugged Jupiter. 5 p.m. free
Feathers Jam Castro Valley United Methodist Church. 1:30 p.m. free
Jimmy's All-Star Super Sessions Jimmy [illegible] & different band every week, Peter's Restaurant. 5 p.m. free
Strawberry Music Festival: Spring with [illegible] Earl Keen, Ruthie Foster, Mason Pinney & Friends, [illegible] Stanton [illegible] Dougan, Lil Smith, I See Hawks in LA, Joan Wallace, Sarah [illegible] the Tall Boys, Johnny Wallace & Ned Bent, free more. Camp Mather. $180-$200 four-day pass.

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Albany High Jazz Band with Rhythm Bound R&B Band. Albany. 7 p.m. $15, $10
Ed Wallace Jazz-inspired piano improvisations, Horton Gypsy Café. 12:30 p.m., free

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James Farm jazz supergroup featuring Joshua Redman, Aaron Parks, Matt Penman and Eric Harland. Yoshi's Oakland, 7 & 9 p.m., $10-$30

Jazz and R&B Night Dorsey's Locker, 6-10 p.m., free

John Santos Anna's Cafe, 5 p.m., free

Lavay Smith Cafe Van Kleef, 9 p.m.

The Randy Craig Trio Max's Lounge, 4:30-7:30 p.m., free

Terrence Brewer Trio Vocal Restaurant & Bar, 7:30 p.m., free

Vocal Jazz Session hosted by [illegible] Jones, Jazzschool, 7 p.m., $8-$12

Rock & Pop

[illegible] Tardino Eli's Mile High Club, 8 p.m.

Germany with WHITE, Gut Quilt, [illegible], and Pop 1280, The New Parish, 7:30 p.m., $12

Go Fumed with D Sherpa, [illegible], and [illegible], [illegible], 8 p.m., $7

Maurice Tani Disco [illegible], 7 p.m., free

MY AMP Showcase Ashkenaz, 2 p.m., $6

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

KBLX Stone Soul Concert with [illegible]

brunch Charlie [illegible], Cameo, Ohio Players, Lakeside, and The Blues Travelers/Nick & Russ Stone, Sleep Train Pavilion, noon, $75-$100

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

Domingo de [illegible] Afro-Cuban rumba percussion & dance party, Cafe Valparaiso, 3:30-6:30 p.m., free

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Cindy Stevenson Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., free

Joe McLaughlin with Bob Gregory, Cafe du Nord, 8 p.m., $15

Terry Stevenson Johnny Foley's Irish House, 9 p.m., free

Classical & Opera

Michael [illegible] on Blues for Sunday champagne brunch, Top of the Mark, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., $58 for brunch (plus Bloody and Mi...

Gospel & Vocal

Gospel [illegible] with Future [illegible] & rotating brunch, 3300 on Fillmore, 11 a.m. & 1 p.m., $20, Redmond/Brunch

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Hugh Laurie Great American Music Hall, 8 p.m., $55

Karl Ritter Trio The Boom!, 7-10:30 p.m., free

Lloyd Gregory [illegible] & Blues, 8 & 10 p.m., $15

Tammy L Hall [illegible], 1 p.m.

Vocal Lehnsm & Friends featuring Ginette Speight, Sam Grobe-Heintz, & Mark Gilzman, Sugarsteen/Bluebird, 4:30-8:30 p.m., $5

Rock & Pop

The Cult with Against Me, and The Icarus Line, The Fillmore, 8 p.m., $48.50

Dandy With Doyle 'Wolfgang Van Frankenstein' [illegible] of The Misfits, [illegible], 8 p.m., $19

King Louie's Gregory Monuments with Thee Chemicals, Top Ten, and The Suicide Attack Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., $8

TV Girl with Allen Clapp And His Orchestra, The Swatch Bedroom, and Bubblegum [illegible] Lovers, 8 p.m., $7

Unnatural Helpers with King Lollipop, Zig Zags, and and Baobs, The Hemlock, 4 p.m., $7

More Listings Online

Get info about hundreds of [illegible] events at EastBayExpress.com & m.EastBayExpress.com

MONDAY 28

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

"Uptown Rubber Rebba" Sue Domingo with Rubber Rebba Minus, The Uptown, 8 p.m., $6

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

3rd Annual Bay to May Concert featuring Vernon Hall, Bob Stow, C. Holiday, Mm. Lid Yases, Stacy Hogg, Lady Greene, Pandoros F.C. Frdee Texas, and special guests, Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $30

Rock & Pop

Cold World with Backtrack, Expire, Twitching Tongues, Minus, and Blues End Path, The New Parish, 8 p.m., $12, $14

Sherbie Tarnino Eli's Mile High Club, 1 p.m. **[illegible]** with Brainkil, Landmine Marathon, and Your Enemy, Gregory Dixon Opera house, 7 p.m., $13

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaeton

[illegible] Connection Three [illegible], 8 p.m., free

SAN FRANCISCO

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Le Jazz Hot Le Colonial, 7 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

Padman with La Pan, BBQ at 2 p.m., Pork Pub Tavern, 9 p.m., $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

The Roots The Regency Ballroom, 8 p.m., $35

TUESDAY 29

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Country Concert Oracle Night with [illegible], Three's Bar & Grill, 7:30-11 p.m., free

Kent Craig Eli's [illegible], 6 p.m., free

Mignite Ramblers with Cajun/Zydeco dance lesson at 8 p.m., Ashkenaz, 8:30 p.m., $10

Gracie Healy Peter's Restaurant, 7:30-9 p.m., free

Tuesday Night Live Music This week: Gracie Cajing Band, Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden, 7 p.m., $5 suggested

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Terrence Brewer Jazz Duo with Gregory Jones, Vesa, 8 p.m., $5

Randy Craig Trio Caffe Trieste, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free

Jed Gracie dinner jazz with guest [illegible] Surgent, The Alley, 8 p.m., free

Terrence Gracie Trio Jupiter, 8 p.m., free

Rock & Pop

La Pan with Frisky and Shmitic Blues, Modernate, and Jed Eyed King, Eli's Mile High Club, 7 p.m.

Modern Kicks with Van Morter Project, Pushing the Sun, and Bluesde Shapes, Stork Club, 9 p.m., $8

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Trio R-A [illegible] bi-weekly event with comedy and Trio, Dorsey's Locker, 1 p.m., free

Imorcgons Jupiter, 8 p.m., free

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WED 5/23 9:00 pm $10 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT — STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL
THU 5/24 7:30 pm $20 $15 18 & under — JAZZ/FUNK/AFRO CUBAN — BERKELEY HIGH JAZZ CUBA TRIP BENEFIT featuring MINGUS AMUNGUS
FRI 5/25 9:00 pm $15 $12 advance — ROCK/POP/HIP-HOP — CRIS CAB RADICAL SOMETHING BOOSTIVE
SAT 5/26 9:30 pm $15 $12 advance — CELEBRATE CARNAVAL RIO STYLE — SAMBALA BATERIA with Rumba & Grade AQUABELA DANCE ENSEMBLE 8 pm Samba dance lesson
SUN 5/27 7:00 pm $10 - $10 — BENEFIT FOR ALBANY MUSIC FUND — ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND AND RHYTHM BOUND R&B BAND
MON 5/28 6:00 pm $6 — YOUTH ROCK BANDS — MY AMP SHOWCASE (MARIN YOUTH ACCELERATED MUSIC PROGRAM)
TUE 5/29 8:30 pm $10 — CAJUN/CREOLE — MIDNITE RAMBLERS 8 pm Cajun Zydeco dance lesson
WED 5/30 9:00 pm $10 — GRATEFUL DEAD NIGHT — STU ALLEN & MARS HOTEL
THU 5/31 8:30 pm $15 — COMMUNITY BENEFIT NIGHT — "Basement & Beyond" Tribute to BOB DYLAN & THE BAND with Maria Muldaur, Country Joe McDonald, Pat Nevins, [illegible] Garis, Eric & Suzy Thompson, more! A Benefit for Ashkenaz!
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C&C

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

Bay Bird Blues Cafe du Nord, 8 p.m., $10-$12.

Joe Doe Oakland with Mike Jones, Rick & Mortar Music Hall, 8 p.m., $7, $10.

Rock & Pop

Boneshop Rejects The Parkside, 8 p.m., $15.

Mingo's Umbrella Pink Cloud Brewery, 6:30 p.m., free.

Jos' Friends with J.J.C.H.V and Ugly Dudes, Hemlock Tavern, 8 p.m., $8.

Rocketship Rocketship with Bass Line Burns, Turn City Saints, and DJ Big Nate, The Knockout, 9:30 p.m., $6.

Superlonesomes with Active Child and Lord Huron, The Independent, 8 p.m., $15.

Yesterdays with Chase the Hangover, 11 Bar, 7 p.m., free.

WEDNESDAY 30

EAST BAY

Blues, Folk & Country

Sweet Root with Aeon Engine, Dore Velante, 8 p.m., free.

Sweet Sweet Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, 8 p.m., $14.50-$18.50.

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

Roadhouse Ensemble featuring Jerry Go-ings, Yoshi's Oakland, 8 p.m., $15.

Jazz Theory Performance Showcase with Earl Gander 57th Street Gallery, 6-8 p.m.

Grandmothers Jupiter, 8 p.m., free.

Rock & Pop

Blue Star Dunes with Evil Star Ruel, Bill's Little High Club, 7 p.m.

Sweet News Gospel with Americanos and Hates Grinders, Mua, 9:30 p.m., $5.

KALX 90.7 FM Presents: Big This! weekly local band showcase, The Uptown, 9:30 p.m., free.

72 Topless with Radio Oakland, and MLF, Stork Club, 8 p.m., $5.

World, Latin, Reggae & Reggaetón

Caribbean Night with Reggae Flush and DJ Marabi, Dorsey's Locker, 7-11 p.m., free.

SAN FRANCISCO

Blues, Folk & Country

James McCartney with Jerry Zwart, Cafe du Nord, 8 p.m., $17.

Betts Oakland, Roadhouse Pro Jam Oakland [illegible], 8-11 p.m., $15.

Jazz, Lounge & Cabaret

DoubleBlubBlub with Gautier & Gunter Abraham, Alameda, 7 p.m.

Oakland with the Mitch Marcus Savage Armada, 8 p.m., free.

Rock & Pop

Chris James & The Showdown with The Adversary, Cello Gone Quartet, and The Red Bass, 8 Mortar Music Hall, 8 p.m., $8.

Uss Child with Hemorage, Poor Ladies, and Kudu Tusk, Stil, Mission Gallery, 9 p.m., $4.

Kent Vic & The Storelines with Betts Oakland and Tour Widow, The Oakland, 8 p.m., $22.50.

Sir Lord Use Sweet with The Husky and Big Brag, Hemlock James, 8 p.m., $6.

The Barry with Kevin Hernandez, Julie Barr, and Trans Hayes, Thee Parkside, 8 p.m., $10.

Tycho The Independent, 8 p.m., $18.

Whatevers with French Cassettes and Love of the Hall, 8 p.m., $10.

Soul, Funk, R&B & Hip-Hop

Paradise Sessions Dance party featuring Billy Magic, Pecomorador, Vandell "Get Down" Band House, and Kevin "The Wizard" Wang, Sweet Street/Room, 9:30 p.m., $8.

Submissions for music listings should be e-mailed to Clubs@EastBayExpress.com or mailed to Clubs Editor, East Bay Express, 620 3rd St., Oakland, CA 94607. Deadline is 14 days prior to the event date.

VENUE DIRECTORY

EAST BAY

57th Street Art Gallery 5701 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-654-8078.

924 Gilman 924 Gilman St., Oakland. 510-525-9926.

All Out P Lounge 492 9th St., Lower Patio, Oakland. 510-444-2227.

Albatross Pub 1822 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-2473.

The Alley 3325 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-444-8505.

Oakland, Music 2480 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley. 510-549-1125.

Sessions 707 Marina Vista Ave., Martinez. 925-228-6983.

Art Street Gallery P Oakland, Center 2955 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-[illegible]-3170.

Starrdine 1317 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-525-5054.

The Bottle 135 Park Pl., Point Richmond. 510-[illegible]-1190.

Street and Gun 568 17th St., Oakland. 510-444-2285.

Bottle Bottle Center for the Arts 1001 Joseph St., Alameda. 510-523-6957.

The Bones 1061 B St., Hayward. 510-888-0525.

Cafe Van Kleef 1621 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-763-7711.

Cafe Center 590 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-5658.

Oakland's Bayview Sam 1508 Walnut St., #8, Berkeley. 510-848-8905.

Del 1220 1220 Pine St., Walnut Creek. 925-938-4580.

Club 23 2311 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-285-542.

Dog Haus 428 3rd St., Oakland. 650-853-7188.

Double Life 3563 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-465-4224.

Duggs Lounge 5422 College Ave., Oakland. 510-652-2881.

Dan's Best Sports Bar 1524 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. 925-932-1331.

Down Avenue 347 14th St., Oakland. 510-893-0871.

Engine Hall 2305 Alameda Ave., Alameda. 510-785-4281.

Eve Center 5256 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-336-1813.

It's a Nice High Club 3629 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland. 510-384-8006.

Era Art Bar and Center 19 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-827-4409.

Everett P Dams Bedlington 126 Broadway, Oakland. 510-663-2350.

First Congregational Center 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. 510-848-3696.

First Presbyterian Center 2619 Broadway, Oakland. 510-444-3555.

Fox Oakland 1807 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-745-3000.

Forus 170 W. Pennyam Rd., Hayward. 510-783-1701.

Freight & Salvage 2020 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-644-2020.

Betts Kid UC Berkeley (Bancroft Way at College Ave.), Berkeley. 510-642-9988.

High Home, Avenue 5303 High St., Alameda. 510-995-8049.

Island Paradise Club 1436 Oakland St., Alameda. 510-865-2225.

Jazzschool 2087 Addison St., Berkeley. 510-845-5373.

Center Fellowship Center of the First Day 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 510-848-0237.

John Patrick's 1853 Park St., Alameda. 510-522-5595.

Julie's Coffee & Tea Garden 1223 Park St., Alameda. 510-865-2385.

Jupiter 2181 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-843-8277.

Karibbean Day 1408 Oakland St., Oakland. 510-281-5760.

Oakland's Carnival 508 2nd St., Oakland. 510-444-0401.

Kingman's Lucky Lounge 3332 Grand Ave., Oakland. 510-465-5464.

Kingman's Ivy Room 858 San Pablo Ave., Albany. 510-526-5888.

La Peña Cultural Center 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-849-2568.

Lake Merritt United Methodist Center 1330 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-465-4793.

Lakeshore Avenue House, Center 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. 510-893-2484.

Leavy Endings Oakland 308 Bonus St., Oakland. 510-434-7543.

The Lounge 1517 Franklin St., Oakland. 510-834-8517.

Lost Seashore Lounge 2320 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda. 510-523-4700.

Lounge 3411 3411 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-[illegible]-3411.

Luka's Taproom & Lounge 2221 Broadway, Oakland. 510-451-4677.

Mason's Sports Bar & Grill 2125 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-256-7695.

Maxwell's Lounge 341 13th St., Oakland. 510-839-6169.

Mills Lounge 5000 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland. 510-430-2256.

Mission Center 690 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-2980.

The New Parish 579 18th St., Oakland. 510-444-7474.

Nomad Cafe 6500 Oakland Ave., Oakland. 510-595-5344.

Oakland City Center 500 12th St., Oakland. 510-238-0636.

Oakland, Dona Opera House 1197 3rd St., Oakland. 510-701-1148.

ORACLE Arena 7000 Coliseum Way, Oakland. 510-569-2121.

Paradise Lounge 2272 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-735-9895.

Paramount Theatre 2025 Broadway, Oakland. 510-465-6400.

Piedmont Center for the Arts 801 Magnolia Ave., Piedmont, PiedmontCenter.org.

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Radio 435 13th St., Oakland. 510-451-2889.

Rhythmic Oakland Street 2162 Blanding Ave., Alameda. 510-865-5060.

The Blues Beauty 7745 San Bruno Ave., Oakland.

Roundup Center 3578 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 925-284-4817.

Oakland's Roadhouse 7700 Clement Ave., Alameda. 510-337-9156.

Ruby Room 132 14th St., Oakland. 510-444-7224.

Center Rock 42915 Gateway Blvd., Fremont. 510-979-9477.

Shattuck Down Low 2284 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-548-1159.

Oakland, Nightclub 2410 San Ramon Valley Blvd., Ste. 130, San Ramon. 925-837-0777.

Shoreline Amphitheatre One Amphitheatre Pkwy., Mountain View. 650-967-3000.

Spats 7474 Lincoln Ave., Alameda. 510-522-1300.

Spoonbucks Lounge 1588 N. Main St., Walnut Creek. 925-977-1888.

St. Brian's Episcopal Center 2300 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-848-5107.

St. John's Presbyterian Church 2727 College Ave., Berkeley. 510-845-6830.

Starry Plough 3101 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. 510-841-2082.

Street Club 5301 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-444-0131.

Studio 1510 1510 8th St., Oakland.

Subterranean Art House 2179 Bancroft Way, Berkeley. 510-881-1281.

Sweet Fingers 464 E. 14th St., San Leandro. 510-553-9489.

Uptown 1928 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-451-8100.

Vinnie's Bar & Grill 2048 Mt. Diablo St., Concord. 925-685-8545.

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200.

Town Broadway, Paramount 5651 Arroyo Rd., Livermore. 925-456-2450.

Oakland Roadhouse UC Berkeley, Berkeley. 510-642-4299.

Blues Blues Inn 6551 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. 510-652-3820.

Yoshi's 510 Embarcadero West, Oakland. 510-238-9200.

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DANA WILLIAMS

SAT. JUNE 2 · $15 ADV/$15 DOOR · DOORS 8, SHOW 9
"TIL THE CASKET DROPS TOUR"
GRIEVES & BUDO
SOL
[illegible]

SUN. JUNE 3 · $15 ADV/$17 DOOR · DOORS 6:30, SHOW 7:30
THE ROCKET SUMMER
THE SCENE AESTHETIC
STATIC

MON. JUNE 4 · $18 ADV/$18 DOOR · DOORS 7, SHOW 8
THE DUKE SPIRIT
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TUES. JUNE 5 · $26 ADV/$26 DOOR · DOORS 7:30, SHOW 8
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THURS. MAY 24 · $19 ADV/$19 DOOR · DOORS 8, SHOW 9
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MARCUS COHEN & THE GODDESS

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FRI. JUNE 8 · $13 ADV/$13 DOOR · DOORS 7:30, SHOW 8
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@ 8pm	Lotus Moons Psychedelic, Rock, Soul
FRI 5/25 @ 8:30pm	Diego & the Allstars Carnaval Hip Hop & Funk
SAT 5/26 @ 8:30pm	Go Van Gogh! Country music from many countries
SUN 5/27 @ 7pm	Maurice Tani
MON 5/28	Closed for Memorial Day
TUE 5/29 @ 7pm	Kent Craig Country Blues Guitar via Digital Underground

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THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS
Tues, May 29
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Wed, May 30
THE AUSTRALIAN BEE GEES SHOW
Thurs, May 31
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Thurs, May 24
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Tues, May 29
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Wed, May 30
GENERATION ESMERALDA
feat. JIMMY GUINGS
Thurs, May 31
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DJ DANCE

EAST BAY

THURSDAY 24

Academy Night w/ DJ and MI Joe G. rocking hip-hop, R&B, dancehall, & Top 40. White Horse Inn, 9 p.m., $3, students free w/ valid ID
Dance Tronic with DJ Joe Pimple The Layover, 10 p.m., free
Club Fever w/ Sensei Dub Sound spinning reggae & dancehall. Shashamane Restaurant, 10 p.m., free
Down Club w/ DJs Kool Kasie & Chris Fox. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free
Dylicious Thursdays Radio, 10 p.m., free
DJ Adil spinning [illegible] weekly. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free
DJ Dauus The Layover, 6 p.m., free
DJ Dtch spinning [illegible] Lost Weekend Lounge, 9 p.m.-2 a.m., free
Club w/ resident DJ [illegible] and weekly guest DJs. Legs, 8 p.m., $5
People People w/ DJs People Kool Kyle and [illegible]. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free
Sessions Deep w/ DJs Dudley & Mr Vybz spinning Jamaican [illegible], and reggae. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free
Riff Raff indie pop, mashups, new wave. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free
Boiler Night w/ DJ Eddie T, plus Dance lessons. Kimball's Bar & Grill, 9 p.m., $10
Tasty ladies night w/ DJ Mr Jonathan spinning hip-hop & R&B. Club 21, 9 p.m., $10-$15
People Dance Sessions featuring DJs Carlos Mena and Cecil. Beech and Bar, 5 p.m., free

FRIDAY 25

Club [illegible] spinning Latin music. Club 21, 9 p.m., $8-$10
Speakin' w/ DJ Ryan: DJ Ryan spinning the hottest music in the Bay Area. White Horse Inn, 8 p.m., $5
Deejays, Drinks & Dancing! DJ Fluid & special guests spinning bass heavy hits and electro. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free
DJ Dee Gaspo The Layover, 6 p.m., free
DJ [illegible]'s Fresh Jams Happy Hour w/ DJs spinning [illegible], soul, & funk. Parkway Lounge, 5-9 p.m., free
Dub Kush [illegible] Jupiter, 9 p.m., free
Fuzzle w/ DJ [illegible] The Layover, 10 p.m., free
Friday Night Salsa w/ guest DJs spinning salsa. La Estrellita Cafe, 10 p.m., $5
Friday Nite Lowe w/ DJ Ryan K, [illegible] 10 p.m., $5
Happy Death w/ DJ Golden Dawn spinning punk rock, indie & noise rock. The Missouri Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free
Hip-Hop Dance Shows w/ [illegible] Club 1220, 9 p.m., $6
I Love The City Festival w/ [illegible], Steve Aoki, [illegible], James Murphy (of LCD Soundsystem), [illegible] and more. Shoreline Amphitheatre, 1:30 p.m., $55-$99
Latin Explosion [illegible] salsa, merengue, bachata, hip-hop, & house. Anna's Bar & [illegible], 9 p.m.-2 a.m., $8-$15
Mighty Irie w/ DJs [illegible] & Smoke One spinning reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 p.m., $5 before 11 p.m., $10 after
Old-School hip-hop and funk. Radio, 9 p.m., free
Dance Night w/ DJ Dance spinning reggae, soca, salsa, & R&B. Island Paradise Club, 10 p.m., free dance 11:30 p.m.
Retro [illegible] 80s pop night. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free
The Spanish Missouri w/ Roger Mas spinning tropical [illegible], cumbia, [illegible], Latin reggae, reggaeton, & electro. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free
Soiree Fridays DJ Lush & Fat Rob spin R&B & soul. Kimball's Carnival, 9 p.m., $8
Testify w/ DJ Lovet, Prayers spinning northern soul, Motown, 60s, punk, new wave, & rock 'n' roll. Ruby Room, 10 p.m., free
Shake Said Fridays featuring DJ Tropic spinning [illegible], soca, Jamaican [illegible], merengue, dancehall reggae, Bhangra, Arabic music, & more. Conga Lounge, 10 p.m.

SATURDAY 26

All Productions & Hoodstyle DJs spinning R&B & hip-hop. Fluxus, 10 p.m., free
The Bee's Yard hosted by Sean Kennedy. [illegible] Music, 2 p.m., free
Dance & New Wave DJ Tropic spins classic 80s hits. Conga Lounge, 10 p.m., free
East Maxwell's DJs Joey Rana & Soul Profess spin R&B, soul, funk, reggae, & hip-hop. Maxwell's Lounge, 9 p.m., $20
Fuel Wanted w/ DJ Rush and guests spinning hip-hop & R&B. [illegible] and Bar, 9 p.m., $8 before 11 p.m.
Country Saturdays followed by hip-hop & house at midnight. Club 1220, 8:30 p.m.-overnight, $5
Dancehall Saturdays w/ Adrian Bison spinning reggae, dancehall, & hip-hop. The Avenue, 9 p.m., free
Deejays, Drinks & Dancing! DJ Bass & special guests. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., free
Explosive Saturday Night w/ DJ and [illegible] White Horse Inn, 8 p.m., $8
La Hold Loca Latin cowboy night w/ DJs spinning salsa, norteño, & banda plus hot go-go vaqueros. Club 21, 9 p.m., $8-$15
Magic Mike Dance w/ [illegible] & guests host game-surfing extravaganza. Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 9 p.m., free
Inn People Party The New Parish, 9 p.m., $10
Pop History 101 DJs spin pop hits from the Stooges to Michael Jackson. Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free
Reggae Habit w/ DJs Teddy Ruba, [illegible], Pole Massiv & guests. New Karibbean City, 10 p.m., $15
Saucy Saturdays classic hip-hop, neo soul & world flavors. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 10 p.m., $5 before 11 p.m., $10 after
Bang Bang Fuck w/ [illegible] spinning hip-hop, punk, & more. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free
Local Resonance w/ DJ Ramsey and [illegible] Radio, 10 p.m., free
Warm-Up w/ DJ Fluid Out spinning hip-hop, R&B. The Missouri Lounge, 6-10 p.m., free

SUNDAY 27

Outhaus DJs Kincaid, [illegible] & guests spin funk, soul, tech house, & more. Club [illegible], 10 p.m., free
Club Foggie Beech and Bar, 9 p.m., $8
DJ Happy Kingman's Lucky Lounge, 5 p.m., free
"King of Kings" DJ Smoke One and guests spin reggae, dancehall, roots, & rock. Shattuck Down Low, 9 p.m., $10
La Vaquerita Beach and Bar, 9 p.m., $5-$8
Aloha w/ DJ Mpenji spinning soul, funk, & eclectic old-school. Somar Bar & Lounge, 9 p.m., free
Polyrhythmic! DJs [illegible] & [illegible] host a weekly multi-genre exploration of musical movement. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free
Club Sanctuary Dance Community Dance [illegible] SoulSanctuaryDance.com, [illegible], 11 a.m.-1 p.m., donation
Little Fun's Ital Sundays DJs spin ska, rocksteady & roots reggae. The Hotsy Totsy Club, 7 p.m., free

MONDAY 28

Monday Night Soul featuring DJs B-Shaq, [illegible]. The New Parish, 10 p.m., $5
Three-Day Weekend DJ [illegible] spinning hip-hop, R&B & local [illegible] Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free
Underground Lounge psyche '60s & queer 70s music. Radio, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free
People Hang Out? w/ DJ [illegible] spinning rock and roll, soft hits, oldies, & soul. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m., free

TUESDAY 29

Country Music Night plus line dancing. Club 1220, 8 p.m., free
DJ Vinyly spinning funk. Lost Weekend Lounge, 8 p.m.-2 a.m., free
Escape college night featuring DJ Speedy & DJ [illegible]. Club 21, 9 p.m., free
Joe Quixx Spins Vinyl Disco Volante, 8 p.m., free
Soul Fyah DJs Juan & Sweg spinning reggae & world music. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free

WEDNESDAY 30

Dessert [illegible], 9 p.m., free
Hump Day w/ DJs Jel & [illegible]. The Missouri Lounge, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free
The Jet Set w/ DJ Dessert and guests. Luka's Taproom & Lounge, 9 p.m., free
The Bass Off: Radio Bay Hip-Hop w/ DJs spinning hip-hop. Club 21, 9 p.m., $5-$10
Karaoke Weekend w/ DJ Fire Dog. The Layover, 9 p.m., free
Throw Night featuring [illegible] spinning metal and more. [illegible]'s Saloon, 10 p.m., free
Paraquines Latin cowboy night w/ host Violeta. Beach and Bar, 7 p.m., $8-$15
Dance Punk, indie, new wave, & classic rock w/ DJ [illegible]. Ruby Room, 10 p.m.-2 a.m., free
Hollywood Hot Wednesdays poetry, open mic, and live DJ. [illegible], 10 p.m., free ●

PICKS

After Carnaval Get Down with The Latin Soul Brothers

Our Indian Summer may have passed away, but there's no question that disco weather has finally set in, and hopefully it will supplant the coastal fog — for a while, at least. This week, San Francisco celebrates Carnaval with a fabulously colorful parade, featuring samba dancers, ballet folklórico, reggae artists, dance [illegible], and [illegible]. As always, a slew of after-parties will follow. We recommend the one hosted by DJ Joe Quixx and notable freestyler [illegible], two members of arts collective The Latin Soul Brothers. They promise a mix of samba, salsa, funk, reggae, boogaloo, bossa nova, house, Afrobeat, tropicália, dancehall, hip-hop, and pretty much any other genre that's available on wax — hopefully including disco. If the Brothers are true to their word, then it might be a more varied soundtrack than you'll hear at the Carnaval Parade itself. The party goes down at Som Bar (2925 16th St., San Francisco) on Sunday, May 27, 4-9 p.m., free. SomBar.com — Rachel Swan

AQUARIUM AGE

URANUS/PLUTO SQUARE: PART ONE

For the week of May 23-29, 2012

By Raffee Finn

This week — and for many, many weeks to come — the planets remind us that history actually does repeat itself. But don't confuse this cosmic repetition with the ongoing retrograde review of recent personal relationships patterns that retrospective continues for another few weeks, and then recedes. The deeper repetitive pattern we're in is part of a much older cycle, a cycle whose signature is rebellion and revolution, turmoil and disruption, and, if we're willing to learn from history, a cycle that provides a much deeper way of understanding our human situation. It's a celestial dimension that adds new meaning to the cliché about living in "interesting times." We've just entered a three-year cycle of seven exact squares between Uranus and Pluto that are certain to accelerate the already rapid pace of personal and collective transformation.

Astrology sees interactions among all the outer planets — Jupiter to Pluto — as repetitive patterns that make it possible to recognize specific collective cultural trends. From that perspective, all Uranus/Pluto interactions signify intense processes of change and revolution. Uranus represents a catalyzing force that disrupts the status quo. Pluto represents the principle of death and eventual rebirth. And when they interact their combined presence manifests as dynamic and dramatic chain reactions that engender shifts in attitudes and action. The movements for civil rights, gender rights and workers' rights can all be identified as manifestations of Uranus/Pluto contacts.

The current series of squares began with a Uranus/Pluto conjunction that occurred from 1965 through 1966. The beginning of a cycle sets the tone for what will follow. The Sixties were a time of disruptive upheaval, as a deep desire for freedom moved many to search for new, creative answers to the same disturbing circumstances that always tend to mire us in the worst of what it means to be human: the need to exploit others on the basis of race, gender, religion and economics. The violence of this exploitation can be seen as desperate attempts to assuage our existential anxiety by creating the illusion of safety through the delusion of superiority.

The first square takes place on June 24. On June 6, 1966, in Cape Town, South Africa, Bobby Kennedy delivered a Day of Affirmation Speech to the National Union of South African Students, in which he referenced the notion of living in "interesting times" and what is required of those who do. He calls those interesting times — nearly fifty years ago — times of "danger and uncertainty," but also times that are "more open to creative energy" than "any other time in history." His words still ring true.

Many cultural paradigms shifted during the Sixties, but the crucial issues remain the same today. And because they do, the next several years of Uranus/Pluto squares are sure to inspire movements for social justice. Those movements will reflect the current cultural syntax, but they will also express the same concerns about the well-being of our fellow humans. If you haven't already, now would be a good time to contemplate how you want to respond to the challenge of those concerns. Remember: Our collective reality is created by our combined individual efforts.

If you know your Ascendant and/or your Moon Sign, read that, too.

ARIES Create greater strength, internal as well as external, by reaffirming your commitment to integrating your deepest values. Sounds like a no-brainer, but walking your talk always requires effort.

TAURUS The secret is learning how to visualize the outcome without falling into the traps of negative thinking or fantasy. Focus your efforts on what will ultimately be the most soul-satisfying picture of reality.

GEMINI You've changed, and there is no reason to doubt your process, so take your time emerging from your cocoon and simply enjoy flexing your new beautiful wings.

CANCER Choose your partners wisely because no matter what the surface focus may be, the underlying context is all about your alliances, personal as well as professional.

LEO Rather than becoming confused by mixed messages deepen your commitment to keeping your own counsel. I'm not suggesting you ignore the opinion of others. I'm simply advising you to listen to your heart.

VIRGO Instead of squandering your energy on insignificant matters, save your efforts for important endeavors. Yes, the details contribute to the overall situation, but it's the big picture that determines the outcome.

LIBRA You're still in a deep process of revolutionizing your relationships — all of them, including how you relate to yourself. Once again, pay attention to what you need in order to feel safe and secure from the inside out.

SCORPIO You are uncomfortable, but only because you're in training, preparing for deeper, more consistent daily interactions with friends and family. Embracing that phase will be much easier than resisting it.

SAGITTARIUS Move into your creative energy and be bold, innovative, and confident in your choices. Not every idea will fly, but you'll gain solid, tangible momentum that will boost your self-esteem and soothe your anxiety.

CAPRICORN You're not in danger; you're in process. And as the bottom of your psyche continues to be disturbed, you'll have more opportunities to see what lies beneath the surface of everyday interactions.

AQUARIUS Consider it a challenge of imagination. Can you allow yourself to envision the necessary next steps without the fear of doing or saying the wrong thing? It may sound easy, but it will require awareness and skill.

PISCES It's all about attitude: If you embrace your responsibilities, they won't feel so burdensome. If you're willing to speak the truth about what you need, you'll find it much easier to release your anxiety about being left out. ●

For More Info

Raffee Finn specializes in Transformational Astrology. For readings, call 1-888-837-9284, write P.O. Box 343, New York, NY 10025, visit AquariumAge.com or e-mail Raffee@AquariumAge.com. Copyright © 2012 by Raffee Finn

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SAVAGE LOVE

YES MEANS YES

When teenage relationships move too fast.

By Dan Savage

I'm a seventeen-year-old girl and, in most aspects, I'm confident with myself, my identity, and my body. Earlier this year, I met a girl. She had some serious drama at home and needed to get out of her house, so I let her stay at mine. Things went a LOT farther than I was ready for. I had just had my first kiss the month before and I didn't feel like our relationship was ready for sex, but I went along with it because she never gave me a chance to slow things down or say no.

My feelings for her are gone, she is attractive, but we don't connect. But she has feelings for me. How can I get her to understand or at least respect how I feel if she doesn't understand why this was a big deal?

Growing Older Youth

There's a movement in sex-ed circles to replace the old opt-out consent mantra, "No means no," with a new, improved opt-in consent mantra, "Yes means yes." YMY says it's not good enough to wait for the other person to stop the action with a "no," which many people — particularly young people, particularly young girl people — have a hard time doing. You have to get a "yes."

But the kind of person who doesn't give you a chance to say "no," GOY, is unlikely to solicit a "yes." Which is why we all need to advocate for ourselves in the moment. And you failed to do that.

I don't say that to make you feel bad or to shift the blame onto your shoulders. I say it because we've all been there. Most confident, sexually active adults can point to an early experience that went too far, too fast, a sexual encounter that left us feeling the way you did. And it's possible to walk away from an experience like that feeling empowered to advocate for yourself in uncomfortable sexual situations in the future, provided you learn the right lesson.

Here's the wrong lesson: "I'm a total fuckup who can't speak up for myself when I'm having sex, so I'd better not have sex again. Ever." That's bullshit, GOY, and what's worse, that kind of thinking can make a person more vulnerable the next time she winds up in bed with an insensitive jerk. Here's the right lesson: "I don't have to wait for someone to give me a chance to say no. I can and will say no whenever I want to. I'm not going to let this happen to me again because I never want to feel this way again. Ever."

As for the girl, GOY, tell her that you don't have feelings for her. And tell her why. Don't sugarcoat things to avoid hurting her feelings, because she's got a lesson to learn, too. Hers goes like this: "I didn't ask the person I was with — someone I really liked — if she was cool with what we were doing, and I totally fucked myself out of what could've been a really great relationship. I'm not going to do that to anyone again. Ever."

I'm a sixteen-year-old bisexual guy. I have been in a long-distance relationship since September. My girlfriend — let's call her "Selena" — and I have a good relationship, but, both of us being bisexual, we have discussed the possibility of having relationships with same-gender partners on the side. I recently attended my city's LGBTQ prom. There I met a seventeen-year-old guy who I found somewhat attractive. I gave him my number and he has been texting me often, which makes me feel both uncomfortable and enthralled.

Some of the texts that "Dave" has sent me were sexual in nature. He lives very close to where I do. I am a virgin — both genders considered — and the idea of sex right now makes me uneasy. But I am interested. Still, sex scares me at this point, and I don't think I'm ready. As such, this afternoon, I told Dave that I felt we were moving too fast. He agreed.

1. I am worried about the outcome: should I tell Selena about my "crush"? I feel inhibited. How do I bring it up?

2. How can I have a good relationship with Dave in a nonsexual way? I like him a lot, but is friendship too much to ask since he is sexually active and I am not?

Not Agreeable Intervals

1. Openly, honestly, directly, and without hesitation. It might help if you remind yourself — again and again — that while the stakes may feel high right now, NAI, they're actually quite low. It sounds like your relationship with Selena has allowed you to explore the emotional and social aspects of dating without any sexual pressures or expectations. And that's been good for you, NAI, and you'll be bummed when your relationship with Selena ends. But you shouldn't be too bummed. There just aren't a lot of adults out there who are still dating — or who are married to — the folks they were dating in high school. (There are some, of course, just as there are some ninety-year-old pack-a-day smokers.) So your relationship with Selena is most likely destined to end at some point. And if a conversation about Dave prompts Selena to end things, well, your relationship with Selena was destined to end at some point, right?

Tell her this: "I met this boy, and he's been texting me. I don't want to date him — I'm only somewhat attracted to him — but I'm enjoying the attention. But we should talk about that same-gender-partners-on-the-side arrangement. Not because I'm going to jump into bed with this guy. I'm not ready for sex. But we should talk about this stuff before I meet a boy I do want to have sex with."

If Selena flips and dumps you, then she wasn't open to you exploring your same-sex attractions. Which means your relationship with her wasn't just destined to end, NAI, it needed to end.

2. Don't assume that Dave couldn't possibly be interested in a friendship because he's sexually active. Lots of sexually active people have friends, and most of us are capable of forming new friendships. If a friendship is "too much to ask" of Dave — if he's only interested in your dick — he'll let you know by disappearing on you or by accepting your friendship under false pretenses. If he disappears on you, well, he wasn't a very nice guy, and you didn't lose much. If he accepts your friendship only so he can continue pressuring you for sex, well, then he's not a very nice guy and you won't lose much when you disappear on him.

But he might be up for a friendship. Lots of sexually active people are. So ask. ●

Find the *Savage Lovecast* (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at TheStranger.com/savage.
mail@savagelove.net

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE Trustee Sale No. 434035CA Loan No. 3013437409 Title Order No. 971986 YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 04-11-2007. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 06-13-2012 at 12:30 PM, CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded 04-17-2007, Book N/A, Page N/A, Instrument 2007144834, of official records in the Office of the Recorder of ALAMEDA County, California, executed by: MESSAY MEHARI AND KIBRET AMARE, HUSBAND AND WIFE AS COMMUNITY PROPERTY WITH RIGHT OF SURVIVORSHIP, as Trustor, WASHINGTON MUTUAL BANK, FA, as Beneficiary, will sell at public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state. Sale will be held by the duly appointed trustee as shown below, of all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by the trustee in the hereinafter described property under and pursuant to the Deed of Trust. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. Place of Sale: THE FALLON STREET ENTRANCE TO THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1225 FALLON STREET, OAKLAND, CA Legal Description: ALL THAT CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY SITUATE IN THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE, COUNTY OF ALAMEDA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: THE WESTERN 35 FEET OF LOT 28 AND THE EASTERN 7 FEET 8 INCHES OF LOT 29, BLOCK "G", MAP OF THE GASKILL ADDITION TO THE PARSON GOLDEN GATE TRACT, FILED DECEMBER 5, 1889, ALAMEDA COUNTY RECORDS, DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE NORTHERN LINE OF 48TH STREET (FORMERLY LULU AVENUE), DISTANT THEREON 328 FEET 4 INCHES EASTERLY FROM THE POINT OF INTERSECTION THEREOF WITH THE EASTERN LINE OF SAN PABLO AVENUE, AND RUNNING THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID LINE OF 48TH STREET, 45 FEET, 8 INCHES; THENCE AT RIGHT ANGLES NORTHERLY 113 FEET TO THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY LINE OF PARSONS GOLDEN GATE TRACT; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID BOUNDARY LINE 45 FEET 8 INCHES; AND THENCE SOUTHERLY PARALLEL WITH THE WESTERN LINE OF LOT NO. 28 IN BLOCK LETTERED "G", AS PER MAP HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO, 113 FEET TO THE NORTHERN LINE OF 48TH STREET AND THE POINT OF BEGINNING. EXCEPTING THEREFROM THAT PORTION CONVEYED TO ALAMEDA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BY DEED RECORDED JULY 30, 1974 IN REEL 3740, IMAGE 558, OFFICIAL RECORDS, INSTRUMENT NO. 96915. Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: $653,435.47 (estimated) Street address and other common designation of the real property: 1080 48TH STREET EMERYVILLE, CA 94608 APN Number: 049-1175-010-02 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". In compliance with California Civil Code 2923.5(c) the mortgagee, trustee, beneficiary, or authorized agent declares: that it has contacted the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure; or that it has made efforts to contact the borrower(s) to assess their financial situation and to explore options to avoid foreclosure by one of the following methods: by telephone; by United States mail; either 1st class or certified; by overnight delivery; by personal delivery; by e-mail; by face to face meeting. DATE: 05-18-2012 CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY, as Trustee MARIA MAYORGA, ASSISTANT SECRETARY CALIFORNIA RECONVEYANCE COMPANY IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. California Reconveyance Company 9200 Oakdale Avenue Mail Stop: CA2-4379 Chatsworth, CA 91311 800-892-6902 For Sales Information: (714) 730-2727 or www.lpsasap.com (714) 573-1965 or www.priorityposting.com THE FOLLOWING NOTICES APPLY TO PROPERTIES CONTAINING ONE TO FOUR SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES ONLY. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, this information can be obtained from one of the following three companies: LPS Agency Sales & Posting at (714) 730-2727, or visit the Internet Web site www.lpsasap.com (Registration required to search for sale information) or Priority Posting & Publishing at (714) 573-1965 or visit the Internet Web site www.priorityposting.com (Click on the link for "Advanced Search" to search for sale information), using the Trustee Sale No. shown above. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. A-4242204 05/23/2012, 05/30/2012, 06/06/2012

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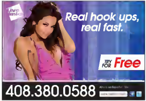

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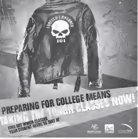
APN: [illegible] TS No: CA[illegible] TO No: [illegible] NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED [illegible] UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 6/6/2012 at 12:00 PM, at the Fallon St. emergency exit to the Alameda County Courthouse, 1225 Fallon St. Oakland, CA 94612, MTC FINANCIAL INC. dba TRUSTEE CORPS, as the duly Appointed Trustee, under and pursuant to the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust Recorded on [illegible] as Instrument No. [illegible] of official records in the Office of the Recorder of Alameda County, California, executed by TERRY LINDSEY, AN UNMARRIED MAN, as Trustor(s), in favor of WASHINGTON MUTUAL BANK, FA, A FEDERAL ASSOCIATION as Beneficiary, WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, in lawful money of the United States, all payable at the time of sale, that certain property situated in said County, California describing the land therein as: AS MORE FULLY DESCRIBED IN SAID DEED OF TRUST The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 5825 HORTON STREET #07, EMERYVILLE, CA 94608 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made without covenant or warranty, express or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the Note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said Note(s), advances if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts created by said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the unpaid balance of the obligations secured by the property to be sold and reasonable estimated costs, expenses and advances at the time of the initial publication of this Notice of Trustee's Sale is estimated to be $308,274.54 (Estimated), provided, however, prepayment premiums, accrued interest and advances will increase this figure prior to sale. Beneficiary's bid at said sale may include all or part of said amount. In addition to cash, the Trustee will accept a cashier's check drawn on a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the California Financial Code and authorized to do business in California, or other such funds as may be acceptable to the trustee. In the event tender other than cash is accepted, the Trustee may withhold the issuance of the Trustee's Deed Upon Sale until funds become available to the payee or endorsee as a matter of right. The property offered for sale excludes all funds held on account by the property receiver, if applicable. If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. DATE: 5/[illegible]/2012 TRUSTEE CORPS TS No. CA[illegible] 17100 Gillette Ave, Irvine, CA 92614 949-252-8300 [illegible], Authorized Signatory SALE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED ON LINE AT www.priorityposting.com AUTOMATED SALES INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 714-573-1965 TRUSTEE CORPS MAY BE ACTING AS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED MAY BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. Notice to Potential Bidders If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a Trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a Trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same Lender may hold more than one mortgage or Deed of Trust on the property. Notice to Property Owner The sale date shown on this Notice of Sale may be postponed one or more times by the Mortgagee, Beneficiary, Trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about Trustee Sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call telephone number [illegible] for information regarding the Trustee's Sale or visit the Internet Web site address on the previous page for information regarding the sale of this property, using the file number assigned to this case CA[illegible]. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. [illegible]



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